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Содержание

The German Classics of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Volume 05 / Masterpieces of German Literature Translated into English

THE ROMANTIC PHILOSOPHERS—FICHTE, SCHELLING, AND SCHLEIERMACHER

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The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century had implicit faith in the powers of human reason to reach the truth. With its logical-mathematical method it endeavored to illuminate every nook and corner of knowledge, to remove all obscurity, mystery, bigotry, and superstition, to find a reason for everything under the sun. Nature, religion, the State, law, morality, language, and art were brought under the searchlight of reason and reduced to simple and self-evident principles. Human institutions were measured according to their reasonableness; whatever was not rational had no *raison d'être*; to demolish the natural and historical in order to make room for the rational became the practical ideal of the day. Enlightenment emphasized the worth and dignity of the human individual, it sought to deliver him from the slavery of authority and tradition, to make him self-reliant in thought and action, to obtain for him his natural rights, to secure his happiness and perfection in a world expressly made for him, and to guarantee the continuance of his personal existence in the life to come. In Germany this great movement found expression in a popular commonsense philosophy which proved the existence of God, freedom, and immortality, and conceived the universe as a rational order designed by an all-wise and all-good Creator for the benefit of man, his highest product; while other thinkers regarded Spinozism as the only rational system, indeed as the last word of all speculative metaphysics; for them logical thought necessarily led to pantheism and determinism. In France, after reaching its climax in Voltaire, it ended in materialism, atheism, and fatalism; and in England, where it had developed the empiricism of Locke, it came to grief in the scepticism of Hume. If we can know only our impressions, then rational theology, cosmology, and psychology are impossible, and it is futile to philosophize about God, the world, and the human soul. Consistently carried out, the logical-mathematical method seemed to land the intellect in Spinozism or in materialism—in either case to catch man in the causal machinery of nature. In this dilemma many were tempted to throw reason overboard as an instrument of ultimate truth, and to seek for certainty through other functions of the human soul—in feeling, faith, or mystical vision of some sort; the claims of the heart and will were urged against the proud pretensions of the intellect (Hamann, Herder, Jacobi). Another way of escape was found by substituting the organic conception of reality for the logical-mathematical view of the *Aufklärung*; nature and life, poetry, art, language, political, social, and religious institutions are not creations of reason, not things made to order, but organic—products of evolution (Lessing, Herder, Winckelmann, Goethe). Man, himself, moreover, is not mere intellect, but a being in whom feelings, impulses, yearnings, will, are elements to be reckoned with. And reality is not as transparent as the Enlightenment assumed it to be; existence divided by reason leaves a remainder, as Goethe had put it.

It was Immanuel Kant who tried to arbitrate between the conflicting tendencies of his age. He was an *Aufklärer* in so far as he brought reason itself to the bar of reason and sat in judgment upon

its claims, and, likewise, in so far as he insisted on the objective validity of physics and mathematics. But he was as much opposed to the pretentiousness of dogmatic metaphysics as to the pusillanimity of scepticism and the *Schwärmerei* of mysticism. He repudiated the shallow proofs of the existence of God, freedom, and immortality no less emphatically than he rejected materialism with its atheism, fatalism, and hedonism. He tried to save everything worth saving—rational knowledge, modern science, the basal truths of the old metaphysics, and the most precious human values. For the scientific intelligence, so he held, nature and the self are absolutely determined; every physical occurrence and every human act are necessary links in a causal chain. But such knowledge is possible only in the field of phenomena (*Erscheinungen*); through sense-perception and the discursive understanding we cannot reach the inner core of reality; nor can we pierce the veil of appearances by means of intellectual intuitions, mystical visions, feeling, or faith, i.e., through the emotional and instinctive parts of our nature. It is the presence of the moral law or categorical imperative within us that points to a spiritual world beyond the phenomenal causal order and assures us of our freedom, immortality, and God. It is because we possess this deeper source of truth in practical reason that freedom and an ideal kingdom in which purpose reigns are vouchsafed to us, and that we can free ourselves from the mechanism of the natural order. It is moral truth that both sets us free and demonstrates our freedom, and that makes harmony possible between the mechanical theory of science and the teleological conception of philosophy. The scientific understanding would plunge us into determinism and agnosticism; from these, faith in the moral law alone can deliver us. In this sense Kant destroyed knowledge to make room for a rational faith in a supersensible world, to save the independence and dignity of the human self and the spiritual values of his people. In claiming a place for the autonomous personality in what *appeared to be* a mechanical universe, Kant gave voice to some of the deeper yearnings of the age. The German Enlightenment, the new humanism, mysticism, pietism, and the faith-philosophy were all interested in the human soul, and unwilling to sacrifice it to the demands of a rationalistic science or metaphysics. In seeking to rescue it, the great criticist, piloted by the moral law, steered his course between the rocks of rationalism, sentimentalism, and scepticism. It was his solution of the controversy between the head and the heart that influenced Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. They differed from Kant and among themselves in many respects, but they all glorified the spirit, *Geist*, as the living, active element of reality, and they all rejected the intellect as the source of ultimate truth. They followed him in his anti-intellectualism, but they did not avoid, as he did, the attractive doctrine of an inner intuition; according to them we can somehow grasp the supersensible in an inner experience which Fichte called intellectual, Schelling artistic, Schleiermacher religious. The bankruptcy of the intelligence was overcome in their systems by the discovery of a faculty that revealed to them the living, dynamic nature of the universe. They were all more or less influenced by the romantic currents of the times, seeking with Herder and Jacobi an approach to the heart of things other than through the categories of logic. Like Lessing and Goethe, they were also attracted to the pantheistic teaching of Spinoza, though rejecting its rigid determinism so far as it might affect the human will. They likewise accepted the idea of development which the leaders of German literature, Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, had already opposed to the unhistorical *Aufklärung*, and which came to play such a prominent part in the great system of Hegel.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte was born in Ramenau, Oberlausitz, May 19, 1762, the son of a poor weaver. Through the generosity of a nobleman, the gifted lad was enabled to follow his intellectual bent; after attending the schools at Meissen and Schulpforta he studied theology at the universities of Jena, Leipzig, and Wittenberg with the purpose of entering the ministry. His poverty frequently compelled him to interrupt his studies by accepting private tutorships in families, so that he never succeeded in preparing him self for the examinations. In 1790 he became acquainted with Kant's philosophy, which two students had asked him to expound to them, and to which he now devoted himself with feverish zeal. It revolutionized his entire mode of thought and determined the course of his life. The anonymous publication of his book, *Attempt at a Critique of all Revelation*, in 1792,

written from the Kantian point of view and mistaken at first for a work of the great criticist, won him fame and a professorship at Jena (1794). Here, in the intellectual centre of Germany, Fichte became the eloquent exponent of the new idealism, which aimed at the reform of life as well as of *Wissenschaft*; he not only taught philosophy, but *preached* it, as Kuno Fischer has aptly said. During the Jena period he laid the foundations for his "Science of Knowledge" (*Wissenschaftslehre*) which he presented in numerous works: *The Conception of the Science of Knowledge*, 1794; *The Foundation of the Entire Science of Knowledge*, 1794; *The Foundation of Natural Rights*, 1796; *The System of Ethics*, 1798—(all these translated by Kroeger); the two *Introductions to the Science of Knowledge*, 1797 (trans. by Kroeger in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*). The appearance of an article *Concerning the Ground of our Belief in a Divine World-Order*, 1798, in which Fichte seemed to identify God with the moral world-order, brought down upon him the charge of atheism, against which he vigorously defended himself in his *Appeal to the Public* and a series of other writings. Full of indignation over the attitude which his government assumed in the matter, be offered his resignation (1799) and removed to Berlin, where he presented his philosophical notions in popular public lectures and in writings which were characterized by clearness, force, and moral earnestness rather than by their systematic form. There appeared: *The Vocation of Man*, 1800 (translated by Dr. Smith); *A Sun-Clear Statement concerning the Nature of the New Philosophy*, 1801 (trans. by Kroeger in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*); *The Nature of the Scholar*, 1806 (trans. by Smith); *Characteristics of the Present Age*, 1806 (trans. by Smith); *The Way towards the Blessed Life*, 1806 (trans. by Smith). After the overthrow of Prussia by Napoleon, in 1806, Fichte fled from Berlin to Königsberg and Sweden, but returned when peace was declared in 1807, and delivered his celebrated *Addresses to the German Nation*, 1807-08, in which he sought to arouse the German people to a consciousness of their national mission and their duty even while the French army was still occupying the Prussian capital.

Fichte was appointed professor of philosophy (1810) in the new University of Berlin, for which he had been invited to construct a plan and in the establishment of which he took a lively interest. During the last period of his life he devoted himself to the development of his thoughts in systematic form and wrote a number of books; most of these were published after his death, which occurred January 27, 1814. Among them we mention: *General Outline of the Science of Knowledge*, 1810 (trans. by Smith); *The Facts of Consciousness*, 1813; *Theory of the State*, published 1820. The Complete Works, edited by his son, J.H. Fichte, appeared 1843-46. New editions of particular works are now appearing.

The world for Fichte is at bottom a spiritual order, the revelation of a self-determining ego or reason; hence the science of the ego, or reason, the *Wissenschaftslehre*, is the key to all knowledge, and we can understand nature and man only when we have caught the secret of the self-active ego. Philosophy must, therefore, be *Wissenschaftslehre*, for in it all natural and mental sciences find their ultimate roots; they can yield genuine knowledge only when and in so far as they are based on the principles of the Science of Knowledge—mere empirical sciences having no real cognitive value. The ego-principle itself, however, without which there could be no knowledge, cannot be grasped by the ordinary discursive understanding with its spatial, temporal, and causal categories. Kant is right: if we were limited to the scientific intellect, we could never rise above the conception of a phenomenal order absolutely ruled by the causal law. But there is another source of knowledge: in an act of inner vision or intellectual intuition, which is itself an act of freedom, we become conscious of the universal moral purpose; the law of duty or the categorical imperative commands us to be free persons. We cannot refuse to accept this law without abandoning ourselves as persons, without conceiving ourselves as *things*, or mere products of nature; the choice of one's philosophy, therefore, depends upon what kind of man one is—upon one's values, upon one's will. The type of man who is a slave of things, who cannot raise himself out of the causal mechanism, who is not free, will never be able to conceive himself otherwise than as a cog in a wheel. Fichte accepts the ego, or spirit, as the ultimate and absolute principle, because it alone can give our life worth and meaning. Thus he grounds

his entire philosophy upon a moral imperative which presents itself to the ego in an inner vision. He also tells us that we can become immediately aware of the pure activity of the ego, of our free action, in a similar act of intellectual intuition. But we cannot know this free act unless we perform it ourselves; no one can understand the idealistic philosophy who is not free; hence philosophy begins with an act of freedom—*im Anfang war die Tat.*

In order that we may rise to free action, opposition is needed, and this we get in the spatial-temporal world of phenomena, or nature, which the ego creates for itself in order to have resistance to overcome. Fichte conceives of nature as "the material of our duty," as the obstacle against which the ego can exercise its freedom. There could be no free action without something to act upon, and there could be no purposive action without a world in which everything happens according to law; and such a causal world we have in our phenomenal order, which is the product of the absolute spiritual principle. By the ego Fichte did not mean the subjective ego, the particular individual self with all its idiosyncrasies, but the universal ego, the reason that manifests itself in all conscious individuals as universal and necessary truth. In his earlier period he did not define his thought very carefully, but in time the absolute ego came to be conceived as the principle of all life and consciousness, as universal life, and ultimately identified with God. His philosophy is, therefore, not subjective idealism, although it was so misinterpreted, but objective idealism; nature is not the creation of the particular individual ego, but the phenomenal expression, or reflection, in the subject of the universal spiritual principle.

Upon such an idealistic world-view Fichte based the ethical teachings through which he exercised a lasting influence upon the German people and the history of human thought. The universal ego is a moral ego, an ego with an ethical purpose, that realizes itself in nature and in man; it is, therefore, the vocation of man to obey the voice of duty and to free himself from the bondage of nature, to be a person, not a thing, to coöperate in the realization of the eternal purpose which is working itself out in the history of humanity, to sacrifice himself for the ideal of freedom. Every individual has his particular place in which to labor for the social whole; how to do it, his conscience will tell him without fail. And so, too, the German people has its peculiar place in civilization, its unique contribution to make in the struggle of the human race for the development of free personality. It is Germany's mission to regain its nationality, in order that it may take the philosophical leadership in the work of civilization, and to establish a State based upon personal liberty, a veritable kingdom of justice, such as has never appeared on earth, which shall realize freedom based upon the equality of all who bear the human form.

The Fichtean philosophy holds the mirror up to its age. With the Enlightenment it glorifies reason, the free personality, nationality, humanity, civilization, and progress; in this regard it expresses the spirit of all modern philosophy. It goes beyond the *Aufklärung* in emphasizing the living, moving, developing nature of reality; for it, life and consciousness constitute the essence of things, and universal life reveals itself in a progressive history of mankind. Moreover, the dynamic spiritual process cannot be comprehended by conceptual thought, by the categories of a rationalistic science and philosophy, but only by itself, by the living experience of a free agent. In the categorical imperative, and not in logical reasonings, the individual becomes aware of his destiny; in the sense of duty, the love of truth, loyalty to country, respect for the rights of man, and reverence for ideals, spirit speaks to spirit and man glimpses the eternal.

Among the elements in this idealism that appealed to the Romanticists were its anti-intellectualism, its intuition, the high value it placed upon the personality, its historical viewpoint, and its faith in the uniqueness of German culture. They welcomed the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a valuable ally, and exaggerated those features of it which seemed to chime with their own views. The ego which Fichte conceives as universal reason becomes for them the subjective empirical self, the unique personality, in which the unconscious, spontaneous, impulsive, instinctive phase constitutes the original element, the more extravagant among them transforming the rational moral ego into a romantic ego, an ego full of mystery and caprice, and even a lawless ego. Such an ego is read into

nature; for, filled with occult magic forces, nature can be understood only by the sympathetic divining insight of the poetic genius. And so, too, authority and tradition, as representing the instinctive and historical side of social life, come into their own again.

Fichte's chief interest was centred upon the ego; nature he regarded as a product of the absolute ego in the individual consciousness, intended as a necessary obstacle for the free will. Without opposition the self cannot act; without overcoming resistance it cannot become free. In order to make free action possible, to enable the ego to realize its ends, nature must be what it is, an order ruled by the iron law of causality. This cheerless conception of nature—which, however, was not Fichte's last word on the subject, since he afterward came to conceive it as the revelation of universal life, or the expression of a pantheistic God—did not attract Romanticism. It was Schelling, the erstwhile follower and admirer of Fichte, who turned his attention to the philosophy of nature and so more thoroughly satisfied the romantic yearnings of the age.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling was born at Leonberg, Würtemberg, January 27, 1775, the son of a learned clergyman and writer on theology. He was a precocious child and made rapid progress in his studies, entering the Theological Seminary at Tübingen at the age of fifteen. Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two he wrote a number of able treatises in the spirit of the new idealism, and was recognized as the most talented pupil of Fichte and his best interpreter. After the completion of his course at the University (1795), he became the tutor and companion of two young noblemen with whom he remained for two years (1796-98) at the University of Leipzig, during which time he devoted himself to the study of mathematics, physics, and medicine, and published a number of philosophical articles. In 1798 he received a call to a professorship at Jena, where Fichte, Schiller, Wilhelm Schlegel, and Hegel became his colleagues, and where he entered into friendly relations with the Romantic circle of which Caroline Schlegel, who afterward became his wife, was a shining light. This was the most productive period of his life; during the next few years he developed his own system of philosophy and gave to the world his most brilliant writings. In 1803 he accepted a professorship at Würzburg, but came into conflict with the authorities; in 1806 he went to Munich as a member of the Academy of Sciences and Director of the Academy of Fine Arts; in 1820 he moved to Erlangen; and in 1827 he returned to Munich as professor of philosophy at the newly-established University and as General Curator of the Scientific Collections of the State. He was called to Berlin in 1841 to help counteract the influence of the Hegelian Philosophy, but met with little success. He died in 1854.

The earlier writings of Schelling either reproduced the thoughts of the *Wissenschaftslehre* or developed them in the Fichtean spirit. Among those of the latter class we note: *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 1797; *On the World-Soul*, 1798; *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 1800. During the second period, in which the influence of Bruno and Spinoza is prominent, he works out his own philosophy of identity; at this time he publishes *Bruno, or, Concerning the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*, 1802, and *Method of Academic Study*, 1803. In the third period the philosophy of identity becomes the basis for a still higher system in which the influence of German theosophy (Jacob Böhme) is apparent; with the exception of *Philosophy and Religion*, 1804, the *Treatise on Human Freedom*, 1809, and a few others, the works of this period did not appear until after Schelling's death. His previous philosophy is now called by him "negative philosophy;" the higher or positive philosophy has as its aim the rational construction of the history of the universe, or the history of creation, upon the basis of the religious ideas of peoples; it is a philosophy of mythology and revelation. Translations of some of Schelling's works are to be found in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, an American periodical founded by W.T. Harris, which devoted itself to the study of post-Kantian idealism. His Complete Works, edited by his son, appeared in 14 volumes, 1856. There is a revival of interest in his philosophy, and new editions of his books are now being published.

Like most philosophers of note, Schelling reckons with the various tendencies of his times. With idealism he interprets the universe as identical in essence with what we find in our innermost selves; it is at bottom a living dynamic process. If that is so, nature cannot be a merely externalized

obstacle for the ego, nor a dead static spatial mechanical system; as the expression of an active spiritual principle there must be reason and purpose in it. But reason is not identified by Schelling with self-conscious intelligence, for with the faith-philosophies and Romanticism he takes it in a wider sense; in physical and organic nature it is a slumbering reason, an unconscious, instinctive, purposive force similar to the Leibnizian monad, Schopenhauer's will, and Bergson's *élan vital*. In this way the dualism between mechanism and teleology is reconciled. Nature is a teleological order, an evolution from the unconscious to the conscious; in man, the highest stage and the climax of history, nature becomes self-conscious. With this organic conception both Romanticists and many natural scientists of the age were in practical agreement; it was the view that had always appealed to Goethe—and Herder before him—and it gained for Schelling a large following. In his earlier system he regarded nature as a lower stage in the evolution of reason and sought to answer the problems: How does Nature become Consciousness or Ego? the problem of the Philosophy of Nature; and, How does Consciousness or the Ego become Nature? the problem of Transcendental Idealism. In his philosophy of identity, nature and mind are conceived as two different aspects of one and the same principle, which is both mind and nature, subject and object, ego and non-ego. All things are identical in essence but differentiated in the course of evolution. It was not inconsistent with these tenets that Schelling sought, in his last period, to discover the meaning of universal history in the obscure beginnings of mythology and revelation rather than in the lucid regions of an advanced civilization.

With the opponents of rationalism Schelling agrees that we cannot reach the inner meaning of reality, "the living, moving element in nature," through the scientific intelligence, but that we must envisage it in intuition. "What is described in concepts," he tells us, "is at rest; hence there can be concepts only of *things* and of that which is finite and sense-perceived. The notion of movement is not movement itself, and without intuition we should never know what motion is. Freedom, however, can be comprehended only by freedom, activity only by activity." Schelling, who is a poet as well as a philosopher, comes to regard this intuition or inner vision as an artistic intuition. In the products of art, subject and object, the ideal and the real, mind and nature, form (or purpose) and matter, are one; here the harmony aimed at by philosophy lies before our very eyes, and may be seen, touched, and heard. The creative artist creates like nature in realizing the ideal; hence, art must serve as the absolute model for the intuition of the world—it is the true and eternal organ of philosophy. Like the artistic genius, the philosopher must have the faculty for perceiving the harmony and identity in the universe; esthetic intuition is absolute knowing. Art aims to reveal to us the profoundest meaning of the world, which is the union of form and matter, of the ideal and the real; in art alone the striving of nature for harmony and identity is realized; the beautiful is the infinite represented and made perceivable in finite form; here mind and nature interpenetrate. In creative art the artist imitates the creative act of nature and becomes conscious of it; in esthetic intuition, or the perception of beauty, the philosophical genius discovers the secret of reality; nature herself is a poem and her secret is revealed in art. This philosophy is a far cry from the logical-mathematical method of the *Aufklärung*; it is a protest against this, a protest in which the leaders of the new German literature, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, as well as the Romanticists, willingly joined. Goethe's entire view of nature, art, and life rested upon the teleological or organic conception; he, too, regarded the ability to peer into the heart of things—to see the whole in its parts, the ideal in the real, the universal in the particular, as the poet's and thinker's highest gift. He called it an *aperçu*, "a revelation springing up in the inner man that gives him a hint of his likeness to God." It is this gift which Faust craves and Mephisto sneers at as *die hohe Intuition*.

Dass ich erkenne was die Welt
Im innersten zusammenhält,
Schau alle Wirkungskraft and Samen
Und tu' nicht mehr in Worten kramen.

There was much that was fantastic in the *Naturphilosophie* and much *a priori* interpretation of nature that tended to withdraw the mind from the actualities of existence; it often dealt with bold assertions, analogies, and figures of speech, rather than with facts and proofs. But it had its merits; for it aroused an interest in nature and nature-study, it kept alive the *philosophical* interest in the outer world, the desire for unity, *Einheitstrieb*, which has remained a marked characteristic of German science from Alexander von Humboldt down to Robert Mayer, Helmholtz, Naegeli, Haeckel, Ostwald, Hertz, and Driesch. It opposed the one-sided mechanical method of science, and emphasized conceptions (the idea of development, the notion of the dynamic character of reality, pan-psychism, and vitalism) which are still moving the minds of men today, as is evidenced by the popularity of Henri Bergson, who, with our own William James, leads the contemporary school of philosophical Romanticists.

Fichte's chief contribution to German thought was the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling's the *Naturphilosophie*, and Schleiermacher's the philosophy of religion. All these thinkers took account of the prevailing tendencies of the times—*Aufklärung*, Kantian criticism, faith-philosophy, Romanticism, and Spinozism—and were more or less affected by them. Schleiermacher also came under the influence of Fichte, Schelling, and Greek idealism, particularly of Plato's philosophy; many were the sources from which he drew his material for the construction of a great system of Protestant theology that exercised a profound influence far beyond the boundaries of his country and won for him the title of the founder of the New Theology.

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, the son of a clergyman of the reformed church, was born at Breslau, November 21, 1768, and was educated at the Moravian schools at Niesky and Barby. Made sceptical by the newer criticism, he left the Moravian brotherhood and entered the University of Halle (1787), where he devoted himself with equal zeal to the study of theology and philosophy. After his ordination in 1794 he occupied various pulpits until 1803, when he was made a professor and university preacher at Halle. In 1806 he removed from Halle to Berlin, becoming the preacher of Trinity Church in 1809 and professor of theology at the newly founded University in 1810, positions which he filled with marked ability until his death, February 12, 1834. It was in Berlin that he came into friendly touch with the leaders of the Romantic school, Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, and Novalis, but he did not allow himself to be carried away by their extravagances. He distinguished himself as a preacher, theologian, philosopher, and philologist, and, by his study of the sources of philosophy, added much to the knowledge of its history. Among the books published during his life-time are: *Addresses on Religion*, 1799; *Monologues*, 1800; *Principles of a Criticism of Previous Systems of Ethics*, 1803; translations of Plato's *Dialogues*, with introductions and notes, 1804-28; *The Christian Faith*, 1821-22. Complete Works, 1834-64.

Schleiermacher's conception of religion is opposed to the rationalistic theology of the eighteenth century, as well as to the Kantian moral theology which has remained popular in Germany to this day. For him religion is not science or philosophy; it does not consist in theoretical dogmas or rationalistic proofs; neither theories about religion nor virtuous conduct nor acts of worship are religion itself; nor is religion based upon a rational moral faith, as Kant had taught. He bravely took the part of Fichte in the atheism-controversy, when the great leaders of German culture, Kant, Herder, and even Goethe, abandoned him to his fate. He rejected the shallow proofs of the *Aufklärung*, as well as the orthodox utilitarian view of God as the dispenser of rewards and punishments, and showed that the real foes of religion were the rational and practical persons who endeavored to suppress the yearning for the transcendent in man and to drive out all mystery in seeking to make everything clear to him. We cannot have conceptual knowledge of God, for conceptual thought is concerned with differences and opposites, whereas God is without such differences and oppositions: he is the absolute union or identity of thought and being. Religion is grounded in feeling, or divining intuition; in feeling, we come into direct relation with God; here the identity of thought and being is

immediately experienced in self-consciousness, and this union is the divine element in us. Religion is the feeling of absolute dependence upon an absolute world-ground; it is the immediate consciousness that everything finite is infinite and exists through the infinite.

The conception of God as the unity of thought and being, and the idea of man's absolute dependence upon the world-ground, call to mind the pantheism of Spinoza. Schleiermacher seeks to tone this down by giving the world of things a relative independence; God and the world are inseparable, and yet must be distinguished. God is unity without plurality, the world plurality without unity; the world is spatial-temporal, while God is spaceless and timeless. He is, however, not conceived as a personality, but as the universal creative force, as the source of all life. The determinism implied in this world-view is softened by giving the individual a measure of freedom and independence. The particular individuals are subject to the law of the whole; but each self has its unique endowment or gifts, its individuality, and its freedom consists in the unfolding of its peculiar capacities. With Goethe, Schiller, and Romanticism, our philosopher rejects the rigoristic Kantian-Fichtean view of duty which, in his opinion, would suppress individuality and reduce all persons to a homogeneous mass; like them he regards the development of unique personalities as the highest moral task. "Every man should express humanity in his own peculiar way in a unique mixture of elements, in order that it may reveal itself in every possible form, and that everything may become real in the infinite fulness which can spring from its lap." "The same duties can be performed in many different ways. Different men may practise justice according to the same principles, each man keeping in view the general welfare and personal merit, but with different degrees of feeling, all the way from extreme coldness to the warmest sympathy." The command, therefore, is not merely: Be a person; but: Be a unique person, live your own individual life. There is no irreconcilable conflict between the natural law and the moral law, between impulse and reason. For the same reasons he defends the diversity of religions and the claims of personal religion; in each unique individual, religion should be left free to express itself in its own unique and intimate way. His ideal is the development of unique, novel, original personalities; and these are expressions of the divine, which rationalism cannot bring under either its theoretical or practical rubrics.

The individual cannot become conscious of, and prize, his own individuality without at the same time valuing uniqueness in others; the higher a value he sets upon his own self, the more the personalities of others must impress him. "Whoever desires to cultivate his individuality must have an appreciation of everything that he is not." "The sense of universality (*der allgemeine Sinn*) is the supreme condition of one's own perfection." Hence the ethical life is a life in society—a society of unique individuals who respect humanity in its uniqueness, in themselves and in others. "They are among themselves a chorus of friends. Every one knows that he too is a part and product of the universe, that in him too are revealed its divine life and action." "The more every one approximates the universe, the more he communicates himself to others, the more perfect unity will they all form; no one has a consciousness for himself alone, every one has, at the same time, that of the other; they are no longer only men, but mankind; rising above themselves and triumphing over themselves, they are on the road to true immortality and eternity." In the feeling of piety man recognizes that his desire to be a unique personality is in harmony with the action of the universe; hence that he can, ought, and must make the development of his uniqueness the goal, the strongest motive, and the highest good, and that he can surely realize what he is striving for, because the universe which created and determined him created him for that.

FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER

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ON THE SOCIAL ELEMENT IN RELIGION (1799)[1] TRANSLATED BY GEORGE RIPLEY

Those among you who are accustomed to regard religion as a disease of the human mind, cherish also the habitual conviction that it is an evil more easily borne, even though not to be cured, so long as it is only insulated individuals here and there who are infected with it; but that the common danger is raised to the highest degree, and everything put at stake, as soon as a too close connection is permitted between many patients of this character. In the former case it is possible by a judicious treatment, as it were by an antiphlegistic regimen, and by a healthy spiritual atmosphere, to ward off the violence of the paroxysms; and if not entirely to conquer the exciting cause of the disease, to attenuate it to such a degree that it shall be almost innocuous. But in the latter case we must despair of every other means of cure, except that which may proceed from some internal beneficent operation of Nature. For the evil is attended with more alarming symptoms, and is more fatal in its effects, when the too great proximity of other infected persons feeds and aggravates it in every individual; the whole mass of vital air is then quickly poisoned by a few; the most vigorous frames are smitten with the contagion; all the channels in which the functions of life should go on are destroyed; all the juices of the system are decomposed; and, seized with a similar feverous delirium, the sound spiritual life and productions of whole ages and nations are involved in irremediable ruin. Hence your antipathy to the church, to every institution which is intended for the communication of religion, is always more prominent than that which you feel to religion itself; hence, also, priests, as the pillars and the most efficient members of such institutions, are, of all men, the objects of your greatest abomination.

Even those among you who hold a little more indulgent opinion with regard to religion, and deem it rather a singularity than a disorder of the mind, an insignificant rather than a dangerous phenomenon, cherish quite as unfavorable impressions of all social organization for its promotion. A slavish immolation of all that is free and peculiar, a system of lifeless mechanism and barren ceremonies—these, they imagine, are the inseparable consequences of every such institution and are the ingenious and elaborate work of men, who, with almost incredible success, have made a great merit of things which are either nothing in themselves, or which any other person was quite as capable of accomplishing as they. I should pour out my heart but very imperfectly before you, on a subject to which I attach the utmost importance, if I did not undertake to give you the correct point of view with regard to it. I need not here repeat how many of the perverted endeavors and melancholy fortunes of humanity you charge upon religious associations; this is clear as light, in a thousand utterances of your predominant individuals; nor will I stop to refute these accusations, one by one, in order to fix the evil upon other causes. Let us rather submit the whole conception of the church to a new examination, and from its central point, throughout its whole extent, erect it again upon a new basis, without regard to what it has actually been hitherto, or to what experience may suggest concerning it.

If religion exists at all, it must needs possess a social character; this is founded not only in the nature of man, but still more in the nature of religion. You will acknowledge that it indicates a state of disease, a signal perversion of nature, when an individual wishes to shut up within himself anything

[1] From Addresses on Religion (Discourse IV).

which he has produced and elaborated by his own efforts. It is the disposition of man to reveal and to communicate whatever is in him, in the indispensable relations and mutual dependence not only of practical life, but also of his spiritual being, by which he is connected with all others of his race; and the more powerfully he is wrought upon by anything, the more deeply it penetrates his inward nature, so much the stronger is this social impulse, even if we regard it only from the point of view of the universal endeavor to behold the emotions which we feel ourselves, as they are exhibited by others, so that we may obtain a proof from their example that our own experience is not beyond the sphere of humanity.

You perceive that I am not speaking here of the endeavor to make others similar to ourselves, nor of the conviction that what is exhibited in one is essential to all; it is merely my aim to ascertain the true relation between our individual life and the common nature of man, and clearly to set it forth. But the peculiar object of this desire for communication is unquestionably that in which man feels that he is originally passive, namely, his observations and emotions. He is here impelled by the eager wish to know whether the power which has produced them in him be not something foreign and unworthy. Hence we see man employed, from his very childhood, in communicating those observations and emotions; the conceptions of his understanding, concerning whose origin there can be no doubt, he allows to rest in his own mind, and still more easily he determines to refrain from the expression of his judgments; but whatever acts upon his senses, whatever awakens his feelings, of that he desires to obtain witnesses, with regard to that he longs for those who will sympathize with him. How should he keep to himself those very operations of the world upon his soul which are the most universal and comprehensive, which appear to him as of the most stupendous and resistless magnitude? How should he be willing to lock up within his own bosom those very emotions which impel him with the greatest power beyond himself, and in the indulgence of which he becomes conscious that he can never understand his own nature from himself alone? It will rather be his first endeavor, whenever a religious view gains clearness in his eye, or a pious feeling penetrates his soul, to direct the attention of others to the same object, and, as far as possible, to communicate to their hearts the elevated impulses of his own.

If, then, the religious man is urged by his nature to speak, it is the same nature which secures to him the certainty of hearers. There is no element of his being with which, at the same time, there is implanted in man such a lively feeling of his total inability to exhaust it by himself alone, as with that of religion. A sense of religion has no sooner dawned upon him, than he feels the infinity of its nature and the limitation of his own; he is conscious of embracing but a small portion of it; and that which he cannot immediately reach he wishes to perceive, as far as he can, from the representations of others who have experienced it themselves, and to enjoy it with them. Hence, he is anxious to observe every manifestation of it; and, seeking to supply his own deficiencies, he watches for every tone which he recognizes as proceeding from it. In this manner, mutual communications are instituted; in this manner, every one feels equally the need both of speaking and hearing.

But the imparting of religion is not to be sought in books, like that of intellectual conceptions and scientific knowledge. The pure impression of the original product is too far destroyed in this medium, which, in the same way that dark-colored objects absorb the greatest proportion of the rays of light, swallows up everything belonging to the pious emotions of the heart, which cannot be embraced in the insufficient symbols from which it is intended again to proceed. Nay, in the written communications of religious feeling, everything needs a double and triple representation; for that which originally represented, must be represented in its turn; and yet the effect on the whole man, in its complete unity, can only be imperfectly set forth by continued and varied reflections. It is only when religion is driven out from the society of the living, that it must conceal its manifold life under the dead letter.

Neither can this intercourse of heart with heart, on the deepest feelings of humanity, be carried on in common conversation. Many persons, who are filled with zeal for the interests of religion, have

brought it as a reproach against the manners of our age that, while all other important subjects are so freely discussed in the intercourse of society, so little should be said concerning God and divine things. I would defend ourselves against this charge by maintaining that this circumstance, at least, does not indicate contempt or indifference toward religion, but a happy and very correct instinct. In the presence of joy and merriment, where earnestness itself must yield to raillery and wit, there can be no place for that which should be always surrounded with holy veneration and awe. Religious views, pious emotions, and serious considerations with regard to them—these we cannot throw out to one another in such small crumbs as the topics of a light conversation; and when the discourse turns upon sacred subjects, it would rather be a crime than a virtue to have an answer ready for every question, and a rejoinder for every remark. Hence, the religious sentiment retires from such circles as are too wide for it, to the more confidential intercourse of friendship, and to the mutual communications of love, where the eye and the countenance are more expressive than words, and where even a holy silence is understood. But it is impossible for divine things to be treated in the usual manner of society, where the conversation consists in striking flashes of thought, gaily and rapidly alternating with one another; a more elevated style is demanded for the communication of religion, and a different kind of society, which is devoted to this purpose, must hence be formed. It is becoming, indeed, to apply the whole richness and magnificence of human discourse to the loftiest subject which language can reach —not as if there were any adornment, with which religion could not dispense, but because it would show a frivolous and unholy disposition in its heralds if they did not bring together the most copious resources within their power and consecrate them all to religion, so that they might thus perhaps exhibit it in its appropriate greatness and dignity. Hence it is impossible, without the aid of poetry, to give utterance to the religious sentiment in any other than an oratorical manner, with all the skill and energy of language, and freely using, in addition, the service of all the arts which can contribute to flowing and impassioned discourse. He, therefore, whose heart is overflowing with religion, can open his mouth only before an auditory, where that which is presented, with such a wealth of preparation, can produce the most extended and manifold effects.

Would that I could present before you an image of the rich and luxurious life in this city of God, when its inhabitants come together each in the fulness of his own inspiration, which is ready to stream forth without constraint, but, at the same time, each is filled with a holy desire to receive and to appropriate to himself everything which others wish to bring before him. If one comes forward before the rest, it is not because he is entitled to this distinction, in virtue of an office or of a previous agreement, nor because pride and conceitedness have given him presumption; it is rather a free impulse of the spirit, a sense of the most heartfelt unity of each with all, a consciousness of entire equality, a mutual renunciation of all First and Last, of all the arrangements of earthly order. He comes forward in order to communicate to others, as an object of sympathizing contemplation, the deepest feelings of his soul while under the influence of God; to lead them to the domain of religion in which he breathes his native air; and to infect them with the contagion of his own holy emotions. He speaks forth the Divine which stirs his bosom, and in holy silence the assembly follows the inspiration of his words. Whether he unveils a secret mystery, or with prophetic confidence connects the future with the present; whether he strengthens old impressions by new examples, or is led by the lofty visions of his burning imagination into other regions of the world and into another order of things, the practised sense of his audience everywhere accompanies his own; and when he returns into himself from his wanderings through the kingdom of God, his own heart and that of each of his hearers are the common dwelling-place of the same emotion.

If, now, the agreement of his sentiments with that which they feel be announced to him, whether loudly or low, then are holy mysteries—not merely significant emblems, but, justly regarded, natural indications of a peculiar consciousness and peculiar feelings—invented and celebrated, a higher choir, as it were, which in its own lofty language answers to the appealing voice. But not only, so to speak; for as such a discourse is music without tune or measure, so there is also a music among the Holy,

which may be called discourse without words, the most distinct and expressive utterance of the inward man. The Muse of Harmony, whose intimate relation with religion, although it has been for a long time spoken of and described, is yet recognized only by few, has always presented upon her altars the most perfect and magnificent productions of her selectest scholars in honor of religion. It is in sacred hymns and choirs, with which the words of the poet are connected only by slight and airy bands, that those feelings are breathed forth which precise language is unable to contain; and thus the tones of thought and emotion alternate with each other in mutual support, until all is satisfied and filled with the Holy and the Infinite. Of this character is the influence of religious men upon one another; such is their natural and eternal union. Do not take it ill of them that this heavenly bond—the most consummate product of the social nature of man, but to which it does not attain until it becomes conscious of its own high and peculiar significance—that this should be deemed of more value in their sight than the political union which you esteem so far above everything else, but which will nowhere ripen to manly beauty, and which, compared with the former, appears far more constrained than free, far more transitory than eternal.

But where now, in the description which I have given of the community of the pious, is that distinction between priests and laymen, which you are accustomed to designate as the source of so many evils? A false appearance has deceived you. This is not a distinction between persons, but only one of condition and performance. Every man is a priest, so far as he draws others around him, into the sphere which he has appropriated to himself and in which he professes to be a master. Every one is a layman, so far as he is guided by the counsel and experience of another, within the sphere of religion, where he is comparatively a stranger. There is not here the tyrannic aristocracy, which you describe with such hatred; but this society is a priestly people, a perfect republic, where every one is alternately ruler and citizen, where every one follows the same power in another which he feels also in himself, and with which he, too, governs others.

How then could the spirit of discord and division—which you regard as the inevitable consequence of all religious combinations—find a congenial home within this sphere? I see nothing but that All is One, and that all the differences which actually exist in religion, by means of this very union of the pious, are gently blended with one another. I have directed your attention to the different degrees of religiousness, I have pointed out to you the different modes of insight and the different directions in which the soul seeks for itself the supreme object of its pursuit. Do you imagine that this must needs give birth to sects, and thus destroy all free and reciprocal intercourse in religion? It is true, indeed, in contemplation, that everything which is separated into various parts and embraced in different divisions, must be opposed and contradictory to itself; but consider, I pray you, how Life is manifested in a great variety of forms, how the most hostile elements seek out one another here, and, for this very reason, what we separate in contemplation all flows together in life. They, to be sure, who on one of these points bear the greatest resemblance to one another, will present the strongest mutual attraction, but they cannot, on that account, compose an independent whole; for the degrees of this affinity imperceptibly diminish and increase, and in the midst of so many transitions there is no absolute repulsion, no total separation, even between the most discordant elements. Take which you will of these masses which have assumed an organic form according to their own inherent energy; if you do not forcibly divide them by a mechanical operation, no one will exhibit an absolutely distinct and homogeneous character, but the extreme points of each will be connected at the same time with those which display different properties and properly belong to another mass.

If the pious individuals, who stand on the same degree of a lower order, form a closer union with one another, there are yet some always included in the combination who have a presentiment of higher things. These are better understood by all who belong to a higher social class than they understand themselves; and there is a point of sympathy between the two which is concealed only from the latter. If those combine in whom one of the modes of insight, which I have described, is predominant, there will always be some among them who understand at least both of the modes,

and since they, in some degree, belong to both, they form a connecting link between two spheres which would otherwise be separated. Thus the individual who is more inclined to cherish a religious connection between himself and nature, is yet by no means opposed, in the essentials of religion, to him who prefers to trace the footsteps of the Godhead in history; and there will never be wanting those who can pursue both paths with equal facility. Thus in whatever manner you divide the vast province of religion, you will always come back to the same point.

If unbounded universality of insight be the first and original supposition of religion, and hence also, most naturally, its fairest and ripest fruit, you perceive that it cannot be otherwise than that, in proportion as an individual advances in religion and the character of his piety becomes more pure, the whole religious world will more and more appear to him as an indivisible whole. The spirit of separation, in proportion as it insists upon a rigid division, is a proof of imperfection; the highest and most cultivated minds always perceive a universal connection, and, for the very reason that they perceive it, they also establish it. Since every one comes in contact only with his immediate neighbor, but, at the same time, has an immediate neighbor on all sides and in every direction, he is, in fact, indissolubly linked in with the whole. Mystics and Naturalists in religion, they to whom the Godhead is a personal Being, and they to whom it is not, they who have arrived at a systematic view of the Universe, and they who behold it only in its elements or only in obscure chaos—all, notwithstanding, should be only one, for one band surrounds them all and they can be totally separated only by a violent and arbitrary force; every specific combination is nothing but an integral part of the whole; its peculiar characteristics are almost evanescent, and are gradually lost in outlines that become more and more indistinct; and at least those who feel themselves thus united will always be the superior portion.

Whence, then, but through a total misunderstanding, have arisen that wild and disgraceful zeal for proselytism to a separate and peculiar form of religion, and that horrible expression—"no salvation except with us." As I have described to you the society of the pious, and as it must needs be according to its intrinsic nature, it aims merely at reciprocal communication, and subsists only between those who are already in possession of religion, of whatever character it may be; how then can it be its vocation to change the sentiments of those who now acknowledge a definite system, or to introduce and consecrate those who are totally destitute of one? The religion of this society, as such, consists only in the religion of all the pious taken together, as each one beholds it in the rest—it is Infinite; no single individual can embrace it entirely, since so far as it is individual it ceases to be one, and hence no man can attain such elevation and completeness as to raise himself to its level. If any one, then, has chosen a part in it for himself, whatever it may be, were it not an absurd procedure for society to wish to deprive him of that which is adapted to his nature—since it ought to comprise this also within its limits, and hence some one must needs possess it?

And to what end should it desire to cultivate those who are yet strangers to religion? Its own especial characteristic—the Infinite Whole—of course it cannot impart to them; and the communication of any specific element cannot be accomplished by the Whole, but only by individuals. But perhaps then, the Universal, the Indeterminate, which might be presented, when we seek that which is common to all the members? Yet you are aware that, as a general rule, nothing can be given or communicated, in the form of the Universal and Indeterminate, for specific object and precise form are requisite for this purpose; otherwise, in fact, that which is presented would not be a reality but a nullity. Such a society, accordingly, can never find a measure or rule for this undertaking.

And how could it so far abandon its sphere as to engage in this enterprise? The need on which it is founded, the essential principle of religious sociability, points to no such purpose. Individuals unite with one another and compose a Whole; the Whole rests in itself, and needs not to strive for anything beyond. Hence, whatever is accomplished in this way for religion is the private affair of the individual for himself, and, if I may say so, more in his relations out of the church than in it. Compelled to descend to the low grounds of life from the circle of religious communion, where the mutual existence and life in God afford him the most elevated enjoyment and where his spirit,

penetrated with holy feelings, soars to the highest summit of consciousness, it is his consolation that he can connect everything with which he must there be employed, with that which always retains the deepest significance in his heart. As he descends from such lofty regions to those whose whole endeavor and pursuit are limited to earth, he easily believes—and you must pardon him the feeling—that he has passed from intercourse with Gods and Muses to a race of coarse barbarians. He feels like a steward of religion among the unbelieving, a herald of piety among the savages; he hopes, like an Orpheus or an Amphion, to charm the multitude with his heavenly tones; he presents himself among them, like a priestly form, clearly and brightly exhibiting the lofty, spiritual sense which fills his soul, in all his actions and in the whole compass of his Being. If the contemplation of the Holy and the Godlike awakens a kindred emotion in them, how joyfully does he cherish the first presages of religion in a new heart, as a delightful pledge of its growth even in a harsh and foreign clime! With what triumph does he bear the neophyte with him to the exalted assembly! This activity for the promotion of religion is only the pious yearning of the stranger after his home, the endeavor to carry his Fatherland with him in all his wanderings, and everywhere to find again its laws and customs as the highest and most beautiful elements of his life; but the Fatherland itself, happy in its own resources, perfectly sufficient for its own wants, knows no such endeavor.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE

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THE DESTINY OF MAN (1800) ADAPTED FROM THE TRANSLATION BY FREDERIC H. HEDGE BOOK III: FAITH

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"Not merely to know, but to act according to thy knowledge, is thy destination." So says the voice which cries to me aloud from my innermost soul, so soon as I collect and give heed to myself for a moment. "Not idly to inspect and contemplate thyself, nor to brood over devout sensations—no! thou existest to act. Thine actions, and only thine actions, determine thy worth."

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Shall I refuse obedience to that inward voice? I will not do it. I will choose voluntarily the destination which the impulse imputes to me. And I will grasp, together with this determination, the thought of its reality and truth, and of the reality of all that it presupposes. I will hold to the viewpoint of natural thinking, which this impulse assigns to me, and renounce all those morbid speculations and refinements of the understanding which alone could make me doubt its truth. I understand thee now, sublime Spirit![2] I have found the organ with which I grasp this reality, and with it, probably, all other reality. Knowledge is not that organ. No knowledge can prove and demonstrate itself. Every knowledge presupposes a higher as its foundation, and this upward process has no end. It is Faith, that voluntary reposing in the view which naturally presents itself, because it is the only one by which we can fulfil our destination—this it is that first gives assent to knowledge, and exalts to certainty and conviction what might otherwise be mere illusion. It is not knowledge, but a determination of the will to let knowledge pass for valid. I hold fast, then, forever to this expression. It is not a mere difference of terms, but a real deep-grounded distinction, exercising a very important influence on my whole mental disposition. All my conviction is only faith, and is derived from a disposition of the mind, not from the understanding.

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There is only one point to which I have to direct incessantly all my thoughts: What I must do, and how I shall most effectually accomplish what is required of me. All my thinking must have reference to my doing—must be considered as means, however remote, to this end. Otherwise, it is an empty, aimless sport, a waste of time and power, and perversion of a noble faculty which was given me for a very different purpose.

[2] This refers to the second book, which takes the form of a dialogue between the inquirer and a Spirit.

I may hope, I may promise myself with certainty, that when I think after this manner, my thinking shall be attended with practical results. Nature, in which I am to act, is not a foreign being, created without regard to me, into which I can never penetrate. It is fashioned by the laws of my own thought, and must surely coincide with them. It must be everywhere transparent, cognizable, permeable to me, in its innermost recesses. Everywhere it expresses nothing but relations and references of myself to myself; and as certainly as I may hope to know myself, so certainly I may promise myself that I shall be able to explore it. Let me but seek what I have to seek, and I shall find. Let me but inquire whereof I have to inquire, and I shall receive answer.

I

That voice in my interior, which I believe, and for the sake of which I believe all else that I believe, commands me not merely to act in the abstract. That is impossible. All these general propositions are formed only by my voluntary attention and reflection directed to various facts; but they do not express a single fact of themselves. This voice of my conscience prescribes to me with certainty, in each particular situation of my existence, what I must do and what I must avoid in that situation. It accompanies me, if I will but listen to it with attention, through all the events of my life, and never refuses its reward where I am called to act. It establishes immediate conviction, and irresistibly compels my assent. It is impossible for me to contend against it.

To harken to that voice, honestly and dispassionately, without fear and without useless speculation to obey it—this is my sole destination, this the whole aim of my existence. My life ceases to be an empty sport, without truth or meaning. There is something to be done, simply because it must be done—namely, that which conscience demands of me who find myself in this particular position. I exist solely in order that it may be fulfilled. To perceive it, I have understanding; to do it, power.

Through these commandments of conscience alone come truth and reality into my conceptions. I cannot refuse attention and obedience to them without renouncing my destination. I cannot, therefore, withhold my belief in the reality which they bring before me, without, at the same time, denying my destination. It is absolutely true, without further examination and demonstration—it is the first truth and the foundation of all other truth and certainty—that I must obey that voice. Consequently, according to this way of thinking, everything becomes true and real for me which the possibility of such obedience presupposes.

There hover before me phenomena in space, to which I transfer the idea of my own being. I represent them to myself as beings of my own kind. Consistent speculation has taught me or will teach me that these supposed rational beings, without me, are only products of my own conception; that I am necessitated, once for all, by laws of thought which can be shown to exist, to represent the idea of myself out of myself, and that, according to the same laws, this idea can be transferred only to certain definite perceptions. But the voice of my conscience cries to me: "Whatever these beings may be in and for themselves, thou shalt treat them as subsisting for themselves, as free, self-existing beings, entirely independent of thyself. Take it for granted that they are capable of proposing to themselves aims independently of thee, by their own power. Never disturb the execution of these, their designs, but further them rather, with all thy might. Respect their liberty. Embrace with love their objects as thine own." So must I act. And to such action shall, will, and must all my thinking be directed, if I have but formed the purpose to obey the voice of my conscience. Accordingly, I shall ever consider those beings as beings subsisting for themselves, and forming and accomplishing aims independently of me. From this viewpoint, I cannot consider them in any other light; and the above-mentioned speculation will vanish like an empty dream before my eyes. "I *think* of them as beings of my own species," said I just now; but strictly, it is not a thought by which they are first represented to me as such. It is the voice of conscience, the command: "Here restrain thy liberty, here suppose and respect foreign aims." This it is which is first translated into the thought: "Here is surely and truly,

subsisting of itself, a being like me." To consider them otherwise, I must first deny the voice of my conscience in life and forget it in speculation.

There hover before me other phenomena which I do not consider as beings like myself, but as irrational objects. Speculation finds it easy to show how the conception of such objects develops itself purely from my power of conception and its necessary modes of action. But I comprehend these same things also through need and craving and enjoyment. It is not the conception—no, it is hunger and thirst and the satisfaction of these that makes anything food and drink to me. Of course, I am constrained to believe in the reality of that which threatens my sensuous existence, or which alone can preserve it. Conscience comes in, at once hallowing and limiting this impulse of Nature. "Thou shalt preserve, exercise and strengthen thyself, and thy sensuous power; for this sensuous power forms a part of the calculation, in the plan of reason. But thou canst preserve it only by a suitable use, agreeable to the peculiar interior laws of such matters. And, besides thyself, there are also others like thee, whose powers are calculated upon like thine own, and who can be preserved only in the same way. Allow to them the same use of their portion which it is granted thee to make of thine own portion. Respect what comes to them, as their property. Use what comes to thee in a suitable manner, as thy property." So must I act, and I must think conformably to such action. Accordingly, I am necessitated to regard these things as standing under their own natural laws, independent of me, but which I am capable of knowing; that is, to ascribe to them an existence independent of myself. I am constrained to believe in such laws, and it becomes my business to ascertain them; and empty speculation vanishes like mist when the warming sun appears.

In short, there is for me, in general, no pure, naked existence, with which I have no concern, and which I contemplate solely for the sake of contemplation. Whatever exists for me, exists only by virtue of its relation to me. But there is everywhere but one relation to me possible, and all the rest are but varieties of this, i.e., my destination as a moral agent. My world is the object and sphere of my duties, and absolutely nothing else. There is no other world, no other attributes of my world, for me. My collective capacity and all finite capacity is insufficient to comprehend any other. Everything which exists for me forces its existence and its reality upon me, solely by means of this relation; and only by means of this relation do I grasp it. There is utterly wanting in me an organ for any other existence.

To the question whether then in fact such a world exists as I represent to myself, I can answer nothing certain, nothing which is raised above all doubt, but this: I have assuredly and truly these definite duties which represent themselves to me as duties toward such and such persons, concerning such and such objects. These definite duties I cannot represent to myself otherwise, nor can I execute them otherwise, than as lying within the sphere of such a world as I conceive. Even he who has never thought of his moral destination, if any such there could be, or who, if he has thought about it at all, has never entertained the slightest purpose of ever, in the indefinite future, fulfilling it—even he derives his world of the senses and his belief in the reality of such a world no otherwise than from his idea of a moral world. If he does not comprehend it through the idea of his duties, he certainly does so through the requisition of his rights. What he does not require of himself he yet requires of others, in relation to himself—that they treat him with care and consideration, agreeably to his nature, not as an irrational thing, but as a free and self-subsisting being. And so he is constrained, in order that they may comply with this demand, to think of them also as rational, free, self-subsisting, and independent of the mere force of Nature. And even though he should never propose to himself any other aim in the use and fruition of the objects which surround him than that of enjoying them, he still demands this enjoyment as a right, of which others must leave him in undisturbed possession. Accordingly, he comprehends even the irrational world of the senses through a moral idea. No one who lives a conscious life can renounce these claims to be respected as rational and self-subsisting. And with these claims at least there is connected in his soul a seriousness, an abandonment of doubt, a belief in a reality, if not with the acknowledgment of a moral law in his innermost being. Do but assail him who denies his own moral destination and your existence and the existence of a corporeal

world, except in the way of experiment, to try what speculation can do—assail him actively, carry his principles into life, and act as if he either did not exist, or as if he were a piece of rude matter, and he will soon forget the joke; he will become seriously angry with you, he will seriously reprove you for treating him so, and maintain that you ought not and must not do so to him; and, in this way, he will practically admit that you really possess the power of acting upon him, that he exists, that you exist, and that there exists *a medium through which you act upon him*; and that you have at least duties toward him.

Hence it is not the action of supposed objects without us, which exist for us only and for which we exist only in so far as we already know of them; just as little is it an empty fashioning, by means of our imagination and our thinking, whose products would appear to us as such, as empty pictures; it is not these, but the necessary faith in our liberty and our power, in our veritable action and in definite laws of human action, which serves as the foundation of all consciousness of a reality without us, a consciousness which is itself but a belief, since it rests on a belief, but one which follows necessarily from that belief. We are compelled to assume that we act in general, and that we ought to act in a certain way; we are compelled to assume a certain sphere of such action—this sphere being the truly and actually existing world as we find it. And *vice versa*, this world is absolutely nothing but that sphere, and by no means extends beyond it. The consciousness of the actual world proceeds from the necessity of action, and not the reverse—i.e., the necessity of action from the consciousness of such a world. The necessity is first not the consciousness; that is derived. We do not act because we agnize, but we agnize because we are destined to act. Practical reason is the root of all reason. The laws of action for rational beings are *immediately* certain; their world is certain *only because they are certain*. Were we to renounce the former, the world, and, with it, ourselves, we should sink into absolute nothing. We raise ourselves out of this nothing, and sustain ourselves above this nothing, solely by means of our morality.

II

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When I contemplate the world as it is, independently of any command, there manifests itself in my interior the wish, the longing, no! not a longing merely—the absolute demand for a better world. I cast a glance at the relations of men to one another and to Nature, at the weakness of their powers, at the strength of their appetites and passions. It cries to me irresistibly from my innermost soul: "Thus it cannot possibly be destined always to remain. It must, O it must all become other and better!"

I can in no wise imagine to myself the present condition of man as that which is designed to endure. I cannot imagine it to be his whole and final destination. If so, then would everything be dream and delusion, and it would not be worth the trouble to have lived and to have taken part in this ever-recurring, aimless, and unmeaning game. Only so far as I can regard this condition as the means of something better, as a point of transition to a higher and more perfect, does it acquire any value for me. Not on its own account, but on account of something better for which it prepares the way, can I bear it, honor it, and joyfully fulfil my part in it. My mind can find no place, nor rest a moment, in the present; it is irresistibly repelled by it. My whole life streams irrepressibly on toward the future and better.

Am I only to eat and to drink that I may hunger and thirst again, and again eat and drink, until the grave, yawning beneath my feet, swallows me up, and I myself spring up as food from the ground? Am I to beget beings like myself, that they also may eat and drink and die, and leave behind them beings like themselves, who shall do the same that I have done? To what purpose this circle which perpetually returns into itself; this game forever recommencing, after the same manner, in

which everything is born but to perish, and perishes but to be born again as it was; this monster which forever devours itself that it may produce itself again, and which produces itself that it may again devour itself?

Never can this be the destination of my being and of all being. There must be something which exists because it has been brought forth, and which now remains and can never be brought forth again after it has been brought forth once. And this, that is permanent, must beget itself amid the mutations of the perishing, and continue amid those mutations, and be borne along unhurt upon the waves of time.

As yet our race wrings with difficulty its sustenance and its continuance from reluctant Nature. As yet the larger portion of mankind are bowed down their whole life long by hard labor, to procure sustenance for themselves and the few who think for them. Immortal spirits are compelled to fix all their thinking and scheming, and all their efforts, on the soil which bears them nourishment. It often comes to pass as yet, that when the laborer has ended, and promises himself, for his pains, the continuance of his own existence and of those pains, then hostile elements destroy in a moment what he had been slowly and carefully preparing for years, and delivers up the industrious painstaking man, without any fault of his own, to hunger and misery. It often comes to pass as yet, that inundations, storm-winds, volcanoes, desolate whole countries, and mingle works which bear the impress of a rational mind, as well as their authors, with the wild chaos of death and destruction. Diseases still hurry men into a premature grave, men in the bloom of their powers, and children whose existence passes away without fruit or result. The pestilence still stalks through blooming states, leaves the few who escape it bereaved and alone, deprived of the accustomed aid of their companions, and does all in its power to give back to the wilderness the land which the industry of man had already conquered for its own.

So it is, but so it cannot surely have been intended always to remain. No work which bears the impress of reason, and which was undertaken for the purpose of extending the dominion of reason, can be utterly lost in the progress of the times. The sacrifices which the irregular violence of Nature draws from reason must at least weary, satisfy, and reconcile that violence. The force which has caused injury by acting without rule cannot be intended to do so in that way any longer, it cannot be destined to renew itself; it must be used up, from this time forth and forever, by that one outbreak. All those outbreaks of rude force, before which human power vanishes into nothing—those desolating hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, can be nothing else but the final struggle of the wild mass against the lawfully progressive, life-giving, systematic course to which it is compelled, contrary to its own impulse. They can be nothing but the last concussive strokes in the formation of our globe, now about to perfect itself. That opposition must gradually become weaker and at last exhausted, since, in the lawful course of things, there can be nothing that should renew its power. That formation must at last be perfected, and our destined abode complete. Nature must gradually come into a condition in which we can count with certainty upon her equal step, and in which her power shall keep unaltered a definite relation with that power which is destined to govern it, that is, the human. So far as this relation already exists and the systematic development of Nature has gained firm footing, the workmanship of man, by its mere existence and its effects, independent of any design on the part of the author, is destined to react upon Nature and to represent in her a new and life-giving principle. Cultivated lands are to quicken and mitigate the sluggish, hostile atmosphere of the eternal forests, wildernesses, and morasses. Well-ordered and diversified culture is to diffuse through the air a new principle of life and fructification, and the sun to send forth its most animating beams into that atmosphere which is breathed by a healthy, industrious, and ingenious people. Science, awakened, at first, by the pressure of necessity, shall hereafter penetrate deliberately and calmly into the unchangeable laws of Nature, overlook her whole power, and learn to calculate her possible developments—shall form for itself a new Nature in idea, attach itself closely to the living and active, and follow hard upon her footsteps. And all knowledge which reason has wrung from Nature shall be preserved in the course of the times

and become the foundation of further knowledge, for the common understanding of our race. Thus shall Nature become ever more transparent and penetrable to human perception, even to its innermost secrets. And human power, enlightened and fortified with its inventions, shall rule her with ease and peacefully maintain the conquest once effected. By degrees, there shall be needed no greater outlay of mechanical labor than the human body requires for its development, cultivation and health. And this labor shall cease to be a burden; for the rational being is not destined to be a bearer of burdens.

But it is not Nature, it is liberty itself, that occasions the most numerous and the most fearful disorders among our kind. The direst enemy of man is man.

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It is the destination of our race to unite in one body, thoroughly acquainted with itself in all its parts, and uniformly cultivated in all. Nature, and even the passions and vices of mankind, have, from the beginning, drifted toward this goal. A large part of the road which leads to it is already put behind us, and we may count with certainty that this goal, which is the condition of further, united progress, will be reached in due season. Do not ask History whether mankind, on the whole, have grown more purely moral! They have grown to extended, comprehensive, forceful acts of arbitrary will; but it was almost a necessity of their condition that they should direct that will exclusively to evil.

Neither ask History whether the esthetic education and the rationalistic culture of the understanding, of the fore-world, concentrated upon a few single points, may not have far exceeded, in degree, that of modern times. It might be that the answer would put us to shame, and that the human race in growing older would appear, in this regard, not to have advanced, but to have lost ground.

But ask History in what period the existing culture was most widely diffused and distributed among the greatest number of individuals. Undoubtedly it will be found that, from the beginning of history down to our own day, the few light-points of culture have extended their rays farther and farther from their centres, have seized one individual after another, and one people after another; and that this diffusion of culture is still going on before our eyes.

And this was the first goal of Humanity, on its infinite path. Until this is attained, until the existing culture of an age is diffused over the whole habitable globe, and our race is made capable of the most unlimited communication with itself, one nation, one quarter of the globe, must await the other, on their common path, and each must bring its centuries of apparent standing still or retrogradation, as a sacrifice to the common bond, for the sake of which, alone, they themselves exist.

When this first goal shall be attained, when everything useful that has been discovered at one end of the earth shall immediately be made known and imparted to all, then Humanity, without interruption, without cessation, and without retrocession, with united force, and with one step shall raise itself up to a degree of culture which we lack power to conceive.

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By the institution of this one true State and the firm establishment of internal peace, external war also, at least between true States, will be rendered impossible. Even for the sake of its own advantage—in order that no thought of injustice, plunder and violence may spring up in its own subjects, and no possible opportunity be afforded them for any gain, except by labor and industry, in the sphere assigned by law—every State must forbid as strictly, must hinder as carefully, must compensate as exactly, and punish as severely, an injury done to the citizen of a neighbor-State, as if it were inflicted upon a fellow-citizen. This law respecting the security of its neighbors is necessary to every State which is not a community of robbers. And herewith the possibility of every just complaint of one State against another, and every case of legitimate defense, are done away.

There are no necessarily and continuously direct relations between States, as such, that could engender warfare. As a general rule, it is only through the relations of single citizens of one State with the citizens of another—it is only in the person of one of its members, that a State can be injured. But this injury will be instantly redressed, and the offended State satisfied.

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That a whole nation should determine, for the sake of plunder, to attack a neighboring country with war, is impossible, since in a State in which all are equal the plunder would not become the booty of a few, but must be divided equally among all, and, so divided, the portion of each individual would never repay him for the trouble of a war. Only, then, when the advantage to be gained falls to the lot of a few oppressors, but the disadvantages, the trouble, the cost fall upon a countless army of slaves—only then is a war of plunder possible or conceivable. Accordingly, these States have no war to fear from States like themselves, but only from savages or barbarians, tempted to prey by want of skill to enrich themselves by industry; or from nations of slaves, who are driven by their masters to procure plunder, of which they are to enjoy no part themselves. As to the former, each single State is undoubtedly superior to them in strength, by virtue of the arts of culture. As to the latter, the common advantage of all the States will lead them to strengthen themselves by union with one another. No free State can reasonably tolerate, in its immediate vicinity, polities whose rulers find their advantage in subjecting neighboring nations, and which, therefore, by their mere existence, perpetually threaten their neighbors' peace. Care for their own security will oblige all free States to convert all around them into free States like themselves, and thus, for the sake of their own safety, to extend the dominion of culture to the savages, and that of liberty to the slave nations round about them. And so, when once a few free States have been formed, the empire of culture, of liberty, and, with that, of universal peace, will gradually embrace the globe.

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In this only true State, all temptation to evil in general, and even the possibility of deliberately determining upon an evil act, will be cut off, and man be persuaded as powerfully as he can be to direct his will toward good. There is no man who loves evil because it is evil. He loves in it only the advantages and enjoyments which it promises, and which, in the present state of Humanity, it, for the most part, actually affords. As long as this state continues, as long as a price is set upon vice, a thorough reformation of mankind, in the whole, is scarcely to be hoped for. But in such a civil Polity as should exist, such as reason demands, and such as the thinker easily describes, although as yet he nowhere finds it, and such as will necessarily shape itself with the first nation that is truly disenthralled—in such a Polity evil will offer no advantages, but, on the contrary, the most certain disadvantages; and the aberration of self-love into acts of injustice will be suppressed by self-love itself. According to infallible regulations, in such a State, all taking advantage of and oppressing others, every act of self-aggrandizement at another's expense is not only sure to be in vain—labor lost—but it reacts upon the author, and he himself inevitably incurs the evil which he would inflict upon others. Within his own State and outside of it, on the whole face of the earth, he finds no one whom he can injure with impunity. It is not, however, to be expected that any one will resolve upon evil merely for evil's sake, notwithstanding he cannot accomplish it and nothing but his own injury can result from the attempt. The use of liberty for evil ends is done away. Man must either resolve to renounce his liberty entirely—to become, with patience, a passive wheel in the great machine of the whole—or he must apply his liberty to that which is good.

And thus, then, in a soil so prepared, the good will easily flourish. When selfish aims no longer divide mankind, and their powers can no longer be exercised in destroying one another in battle,

nothing will remain to them but to turn their united force against the common and only adversary which yet remains—resisting, uncultivated Nature. No longer separated by private ends, they will necessarily unite in one common end, and there will grow up a body everywhere animated by one spirit and one love. Every disadvantage of the individual, since it can no longer be a benefit to any one, becomes an injury to the whole and to each particular member of the same, and is felt in each member with equal pain, and with equal activity redressed. Every advance which one man makes, human nature, in its entirety, makes with him.

Here, where the petty, narrow self of the person is already annihilated by the Polity, every one loves every other one as truly as himself, as a component part of that great *Self* which alone remains for him to love, and of which he is nothing but a component part, which only through the Whole can gain or lose. Here the conflict of evil with good is done away, for no evil can any longer spring up. The contest of the good among themselves, even concerning the good, vanishes, now that it has become easy to them to love the good for its own sake, and not for their sakes, as the authors of it—now that the only interest they can have is that it come to pass, that truth be discovered, that the good deed be executed—not by whom it is accomplished. Here every one is always prepared to join his power to that of his neighbor, and to subordinate it to that of his neighbor. Whoever, in the judgment of all, shall accomplish the best, in the best way, him all will support and partake with equal joy in his success.

This is the aim of earthly existence which Reason sets before us, and for the sure attainment of which Reason vouches. It is not a goal for which we are to strive merely that our faculties may be exercised on something great, but which we must relinquish all hope of realizing. It shall and must be realized. At some time or other this goal must be attained, as surely as there is a world of the senses, and a race of reasonable beings in time, for whom no serious and rational object can be imagined but this, and whose existence is made intelligible by this alone. Unless the whole life of man is to be considered as the sport of an evil Spirit, who implanted this ineradicable striving after the imperishable in the breasts of poor wretches merely that he might enjoy their ceaseless struggle after that which unceasingly flees from them, their still repeated grasping after that which still eludes their grasp, their restless driving about in an ever-returning circle—and laugh at their earnestness in this senseless sport—unless the wise man, who must soon see through this game and be tired of his own part in it, is to throw away his life, and the moment of awakening reason is to be the moment of earthly death—that goal must be attained. O it is attainable in life and by means of life; for Reason commands me to live. It is attainable, for I am.

III

But now, when it is attained, when Humanity shall stand at the goal—what then? There is no higher condition on earth than that. The generation which first attains it can do nothing further than to persist in it, maintain it with all their powers, and die and leave descendants who shall do the same that they have done, and who, in their turn, shall leave descendants that shall do the same. Humanity would then stand still in its course. Therefore its earthly goal cannot be its highest goal, for this earthly goal is intelligible, and attainable, and finite. Though we consider the preceding generations as means of developing the last and perfected, still we cannot escape the inquiry of earnest Reason: "Wherefore then these last?" Given a human race on the earth, its existence must indeed be in accordance with Reason, and not contrary to it. It must become all that it can become on earth. But why should it exist at all—this human race? Why might it not as well have remained in the womb of the Nothing? Reason is not for the sake of existence, but existence for the sake of Reason. An existence which does not, in itself, satisfy Reason and solve all her questions, cannot possibly be the true one.

Then, too, are the actions commanded by the voice of Conscience, whose dictates I must not speculate about, but obey in silence—are they actually the means, and the only means, of

accomplishing the earthly aim of mankind? That I cannot refer them to any other object but this, that I can have no other intent with them, is unquestionable. But is this, my intent, fulfilled in every case? Is nothing more needed but to will the best, in order that it may be accomplished? Alas! most of our good purposes are, for this world, entirely lost, and some of them seem even to have an entirely opposite effect to that which was proposed. On the other hand, the most despicable passions of men, their vices and their misdeeds, seem often to bring about the good more surely than the labors of the just man, who never consents to do evil that good may come. It would seem that the highest good of the world grows and thrives quite independently of all human virtues or vices, according to laws of its own, by some invisible and unknown power, just as the heavenly bodies run through their appointed course, independently of all human effort; and that this power absorbs into its own higher plan all human designs, whether good or ill, and, by its superior strength, appropriates what was intended for other purposes to its own ends.

If, therefore, the attainment of that earthly goal could be the design of our existence, and if no further question concerning it remained to Reason, that aim, at least, would not be ours, but the aim of that unknown Power. We know not at any moment what may promote it. Nothing would be left us but to supply to that Power, by our actions, so much material, no matter what, to work up in its own way, for its own ends. Our highest wisdom would be, not to trouble ourselves about things in which we have no concern, but to live, in each case, as the fancy takes us, and quietly leave the consequences to that Power. The moral law within us would be idle and superfluous, and wholly unsuited to a being that had no higher capacity and no higher destination. In order to be at one with ourselves, we should refuse obedience to the voice of that law and suppress it as a perverse and mad enthusiasm.

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If the whole design of our existence were to bring about a purely earthly condition of our race, all that would be required would be some infallible mechanism to direct our action; and we need be nothing more than wheels well fitted to the whole machine. Freedom would then not only be useless, but even contrary to the purpose of existence; and good-will would be quite superfluous. The world, in that case, would be very clumsily contrived—would proceed to its goal with waste of power and by circuitous paths. Rather, mighty World-Spirit, hadst thou taken from us this freedom, which, only with difficulty and by a different arrangement, thou canst fit to thy plans, and compelled us at once to act as those plans required! Thou wouldst then arrive at thy goal by the shortest road, as the meanest of the inhabitants of thy worlds can tell thee.

But I am free, and therefore such a concatenation of cause and effect, in which freedom is absolutely superfluous and useless, cannot exhaust my whole destination. I must be free; for not the mechanical act, but the free determination of free-will, for the sake of the command alone and absolutely for no other purpose (so says the inward voice of conscience)—this alone determines our true worth. The band with which the law binds me is a band for living spirits. It scorns to rule over dead mechanism, and applies itself alone to the living and self-acting. Such obedience it demands. This obedience cannot be superfluous.

And, herewith, the eternal world rises more brightly before me, and the fundamental law of its order stands clear before the eye of my mind. In that world the *will*, purely and only, as it lies, locked up from all eyes, in the secret dark of my soul, is the first link in a chain of consequences which runs through the whole invisible world of spirits; so in the earthly world the *deed*, a certain movement of matter, becomes the first link in a material chain which extends through the whole system of matter. The will is the working and living principle in the world of Reason, as motion is the working and living principle in the world of the senses. I stand in the centre of two opposite worlds, a visible in which the deed, and an invisible, altogether incomprehensible, in which the will, decides. I am one of the original forces for both these worlds. My will is that which embraces both. This will is in and of

itself a constituent portion of the supersensuous world. When I put it in motion by a resolution, I move and change something in that world, and my activity flows on over the whole and produces something new and ever-during which then exists and needs not to be made anew. This will breaks forth into a material act, and this act belongs to the world of the senses, and effects, in that, what it can.

I have not to wait until after I am divorced from the connection of the earthly world to gain admission into that which is above the earth. I am and live in it already, far more truly than in the earthly. Even now it is my only firm standing-ground, and the eternal life, which I have long since taken possession of, is the only reason why I am willing still to prolong the earthly. That which they denominate Heaven lies not beyond the grave. It is already here, diffused around our Nature, and its light arises in every pure heart. My will is mine, and it is the only thing that is entirely mine and depends entirely upon myself. By it I am already a citizen of the kingdom of liberty and of self-active Reason. My conscience, the tie by which that world holds me unceasingly and binds me to itself, tells me at every moment what determination of my will (the only thing by which, here in the dust, I can lay hold of that kingdom) is most consonant with its order; and it depends entirely upon myself to give myself the destination enjoined upon me. I cultivate myself then for this world, and, accordingly, work in it and for it, while cultivating one of its members. I pursue in it, and in it alone, without vacillation or doubt, according to fixed rules, my aim—sure of success, since there is no foreign power that opposes my intent.

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That our good-will, in and for and through itself, must have consequences, we know, even in this life; for Reason cannot require anything without a purpose. But what these consequences are—nay, how it is possible that a mere will can effect anything—is a question to which we cannot even imagine a solution, so long as we are entangled with this material world, and it is the part of wisdom not to undertake an inquiry concerning which, we know beforehand, it must be unsuccessful.

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This then is my whole sublime destination, my true essence. I am a member of two systems —a purely spiritual one, in which I rule by pure will alone; and a sensuous one, in which I work by my deed.

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These two systems, the purely spiritual and the sensuous—which last may consist of an immeasurable series of particular lives—exist in me from the moment in which my active reason is developed, and pursue their parallel courses. The latter system is only an appearance, for me and for those who share with me the same life. The former alone gives to the latter meaning, and purpose, and value. I *am* immortal, imperishable, eternal, so soon as I form the resolution to obey the law of Reason; and do not first have to *become* so. The supersensuous world is not a future world; it is present. It never can be more present at any one point of finite existence than at any other point. After an existence of myriad lives, it cannot be more present than at this moment. Other conditions of my sensuous existence are to come; but these are no more the true life than the present condition. By means of that resolution I lay hold on eternity, and strip off this life in the dust and all other sensuous lives that may await me, and raise myself far above them. I become to myself the sole fountain of all my being and of all my phenomena; and have henceforth, unconditioned by aught without me, life

in myself. My will, which I myself, and no stranger, fit to the order of that world, is this fountain of true life and of eternity.

But only my will is this fountain; and only when I acknowledge this will to be the true seat of moral excellence, and actually elevate it to this excellence, do I attain to the certainty and the possession of that supersensuous world.

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The sense by which we lay hold on eternal life we acquire only by renouncing and offering up sense, and the aims of sense, to the law which claims our will alone, and not our acts—by renouncing it with the conviction that to do so is reasonable and alone reasonable. With this renunciation of the earthly, the belief in the eternal first enters our soul and stands isolated there, as the only stay by which we can still sustain ourselves when we have relinquished everything else, as the only animating principle that still uplifts our hearts and still inspires our life. Well was it said, in the metaphors of a sacred doctrine, that man must first die to the world and be born again, in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

I see, oh, I see now, clear before mine eyes, the cause of my former heedlessness and blindness concerning spiritual things! Filled with earthly aims, and lost in them with all my scheming and striving; put in motion and impelled only by the idea of a result, which is to be actualized without us, by the desire of such a result and pleasure in it—insensible and dead to the pure impulse of that Reason which gives the law to itself, which sets before us a purely spiritual aim, the immortal Psyche remains chained to the earth; her wings are bound. Our philosophy becomes the history of our own heart and life. As we find ourselves, so we imagine man in general and his destination. Never impelled by any other motive than the desire of that which can be realized in this world, there is no true liberty for us, no liberty which has the reason for its destination absolutely and entirely in itself. Our liberty, at the utmost, is that of the self-forming plant, no higher in its essence, only more curious in its result, not producing a form of matter with roots, leaves and blossoms, but a form of mind with impulses, thoughts, actions. Of the true liberty we are positively unable to comprehend anything, because we are not in possession of it. Whenever we hear it spoken of, we draw the words down to our own meaning, or briefly dismiss it with a sneer, as nonsense. With the knowledge of liberty, the sense of another world is also lost to us. Everything of this sort floats by like words which are not addressed to us; like an ash-gray shadow without color or meaning, which we cannot by any end take hold of and retain. Without the least interest, we let everything go as it is stated. Or if ever a robuster zeal impels us to consider it seriously, we see clearly and can demonstrate that all those ideas are untenable, hollow visions, which a man of sense casts from him. And, according to the premises from which we set out and which are taken from our own innermost experience, we are quite right, and are alike unanswerable and unteachable, so long as we remain what we are. The excellent doctrines which are current among the people, fortified with special authority, concerning freedom, duty and eternal life, change themselves for us into grotesque fables, like those of Tartarus and the Elysian fields, although we do not disclose the true opinion of our hearts, because we think it more advisable to keep the people in outward decency by means of these images. Or if we are less reflective, and ourselves fettered by the bands of authority, then we sink, ourselves, to the true plebeian level, by believing that which, so understood, would be foolish fable; and by finding, in those purely spiritual indications, nothing but the promise of a continuance, to all eternity, of the same miserable existence which we lead here below.

To say all in a word: Only through a radical reformation of my will does a new light arise upon my being and destination. Without this, however much I may reflect, and however distinguished my mental endowments, there is nothing but darkness in me and around me. The reformation of the

heart alone conducts to true wisdom. So then, let my whole life be directed unrestrainedly toward this one end!

IV

My lawful will, simply as such, in and through itself, must have consequences, certain and without exception. Every dutiful determination of my will, although no act should flow from it, must operate in another, to me incomprehensible, world; and, except this dutiful determination of the will, nothing can take effect in that world. What do I suppose when I suppose this? What do I take for granted?

Evidently, a law, a rule absolutely and without exception valid, according to which the dutiful will must have consequences. Just as in the earthly world which environs me, I assume a law according to which this ball, when impelled by my hand with this given force, in this given direction, must necessarily move in such a direction, with a determinate measure of rapidity, perhaps impel another ball with this given degree of force by which the other ball moves on with a determinate rapidity; and so on indefinitely. As in this case, with the mere direction and movement of my hand, I know and comprehend all the directions and movements which shall follow it, as certainly as if they were already present and perceived by me; even so I comprise, in my dutiful will, a series of necessary and infallible consequences in the spiritual world, as if they were already present, only that I cannot, as in the material world, determine them—i.e., I merely know that they shall be, not how they shall be. I suppose a law of the spiritual world, in which my mere will is one of the moving forces, just as my hand is one of the moving forces in the material world. That firmness of my confidence and the thought of this law of a spiritual world are one and the same thing—not two thoughts of which one is the consequence of the other, but precisely the same thought, just as the certainty with which I count upon a certain motion, and the thought of a mechanical law of Nature, are the same. The idea of *Law* expresses generally nothing else but the fixed, immovable reliance of Reason on a proposition, and the impossibility of supposing the contrary.

I assume such a law of a spiritual world, which my own will did not enact, nor the will of any finite being, nor the will of all finite beings together, but to which my will and the will of all finite beings is subject.

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Agreeably to what has now been advanced, the law of the supersensuous world should be a *Will*.

A Will which acts purely and simply as will, by its own agency, entirely without any instrument or sensuous medium of its efficacy; which is absolutely, in itself, at once action and result; which wills and it is done, which commands and it stands fast; in which, accordingly, the demand of Reason to be absolutely free and self-active is represented. A Will which is law in itself; which determines itself, not according to humor and caprice, not after previous deliberation, vacillation and doubt, but which is forever and unchangeably determined, and upon which one may reckon with infallible security, as the mortal reckons securely on the laws of his world. A Will in which the lawful will of finite beings has inevitable consequences, but only their will, which is immovable to everything else, and for which everything else is as though it were not.

That sublime Will, therefore, does not pursue its course for itself, apart from the rest of Reason's world. There is between it and all finite, rational beings, a spiritual tie, and that Will itself is this spiritual tie of Reason's world. I will, purely and decidedly, my duty, and it then wills that I shall succeed, at least in the world of spirits. Every lawful resolve of the finite will enters into it, and moves and determines it—to speak after our fashion—not in consequence of a momentary good pleasure, but in consequence of the eternal law of its being.

With astounding clearness it now stands before my soul, the thought which hitherto had been wrapped in darkness—the thought that my will, merely as such, and of itself, has consequences. It has consequences because it is infallibly and immediately taken knowledge of by another related Will, which is itself an act and the only life-principle of the spiritual world. In that Will it has its first consequence, and only through that, in the rest of the spiritual world which, in all its parts, is but the product of that infinite Will.

Thus I flow—the mortal must use the language of mortals—thus I flow in upon that Will; and the voice of conscience in my inmost being, which, in every situation of my life, instructs me what I have to do in that situation, is that by means of which it, in turn, flows in upon me. That voice is the oracle from the eternal world, made sensible by my environment, and translated, by my reception of it, into my language; which announces to me how I must fit myself to my part in the order of the spiritual world, or to the infinite Will, which itself is the order of that spiritual world. I cannot oversee or see through this spiritual order; nor need I. I am only a link in its chain, and can no more judge of the whole than a single tone in a song can judge of the harmony of the whole. But what I myself should be, in the harmony of Spirits, I must know; for only I myself can make myself that, and it is immediately revealed to me by a voice which sounds over to me from that world. Thus I stand in connection with the only being that *exists*, and partake of its being. There is nothing truly real, permanent, imperishable in me, but these two—the voice of my conscience and my free obedience. By means of the first, the spiritual world bows down to me and embraces me, as one of its members. By means of the second, I raise myself into this world, lay hold of it, and work in it. But that infinite Will is the mediator between it and me; for, of it and me, that Will is the primal fountain. This is the only true and imperishable reality, toward which my soul moves from its inmost depth. All else is only phenomenon, and vanishes and returns again, with new seeming.

This Will connects me with itself. The same connects me with all finite beings of my species, and is the universal mediator between us all. That is the great mystery of the invisible world, and its fundamental law, so far as it is a world or system of several individual wills: *Union and direct reciprocal action of several self-subsisting and independent wills among one another*—a mystery which, even in the present life, lies clear before all eyes, without any one's noticing it or thinking it worthy his admiration! The voice of Conscience, which enjoins upon each one his proper duty, is the ray by which we proceed from the Infinite and are set forth as individual particular beings. It defines the boundaries of our personality; it is, therefore, our true original constituent, the foundation and the stuff of all the life which we live.

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That eternal Will, then, is indeed world-creator, as he alone can be—in the finite reason (the only creation which is needed). They who suppose him to build a world out of eternal inert matter, which world, in that case, could be nothing else but inert and lifeless, like implements fashioned by human hands and not an eternal process of self-development, or who think they can imagine the going forth of a material something out of nothing, know neither the world nor him. If matter only is something, then there is nowhere anything, and nowhere, in all eternity, can anything be. Only Reason *is*: the infinite reason in itself, and the finite in and through the infinite. Only in our minds does he create the world, or, at least, that from which we unfold it, and that whereby we unfold it—the call to duty, and the feelings, perceptions and laws of thought agreeing therewith. It is *his* light whereby we see light and all that appears to us in that light. In our minds he is continually fashioning this world, and interposing in it by interposing in our minds with the call of duty, whenever another free agent effects a change therein. In our minds he maintains this world, and, therewith, our finite existence, of which alone we are capable, in that he causes to arise out of our states new states continually. After he has proved us sufficiently for our next destination, according to his higher aim, and when we shall

have cultivated ourselves for the same, he will annihilate this world for us by what we call death, and introduce us into a new one, the product of our dutiful action in this. All our life is his life. We are in his hand, and remain in it, and no one can pluck us out of it. We are eternal because he is eternal.

Sublime, living Will, whom no name can name, and whom no conception can grasp!—well may I raise my mind to thee, for thou and I are not divided. Thy voice sounds in me, and mine sounds back in thee; and all my thoughts, if only they are true and good, are thought in thee. In thee, the Incomprehensible, I become comprehensible to myself, and entirely comprehend the world. All the riddles of my existence are solved, and the most perfect harmony arises in my mind.

Thou art best apprehended by childlike simplicity, devoted to thee. To it thou art the heart-searcher who lookest through its innermost thoughts; the all-present, faithful witness of its sentiments, who alone knowest that it meaneth well, and who alone understandest it, when misunderstood by all the world. Thou art to it a Father, whose purposes toward it are ever kind, and who will order everything for its best good. It submitteth itself wholly, with body and soul, to thy beneficent decrees. Do with me as thou wilt, it saith, I know that it shall be good, so surely as it is thou that dost it. The speculative understanding, which has only heard of thee but has never seen thee, would teach us to know thy being in itself, and sets before us an inconsistent monster which it gives out for thine image, ridiculous to the merely knowing, hateful and detestable to the wise and good.

I veil my face before thee and lay my hand upon my mouth. How thou art in thyself, and how thou appearest to thyself, I can never know, as surely as I can never be thou. After thousand times thousand spirit-lives lived through, I shall no more be able to comprehend thee than now, in this hut of earth. That which I comprehend becomes, by my comprehension of it, finite; and this can never, by an endless process of magnifying and exalting, be changed into infinite. Thou differest from the finite, not only in degree but in kind. By that magnifying process they make thee only a greater and still greater man, but never God, the Infinite, incapable of measure.

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I will not attempt that which is denied to me by my finite nature, and which could avail me nothing. I desire not to know how thou art in thyself. But thy relations and connections with me, the finite, and with all finite beings, lie open to mine eye, when I become what I should be. They encompass me with a more luminous clearness than the consciousness of my own being. Thou workest in me the knowledge of my duty, of my destination in the series of rational beings. How? I know not, and need not to know. Thou knowest and perceivest what I think and will. How thou canst know it—by what act thou bringest this consciousness to pass—on that point I comprehend nothing. Yea, I know very well that the idea of an act, of a special act of consciousness, applies only to me but not to thee, the Infinite. Thou willest, because thou willest, that my free obedience shall have consequences in all eternity. The act of thy will I cannot comprehend; I only know that it is not like to mine. Thou *doest*, and thy will itself is deed. But thy method of action is directly contrary to that of which, alone, I can form a conception. Thou *livest* and *art*, for thou knowest, and willest, and workest, omnipresent to finite Reason. But thou art not such as through all eternity I shall alone be able to conceive of Being.

In the contemplation of these thy relations to me, the finite, I will be calm and blessed. I know immediately, only what I must do. This will I perform undisturbed and joyful, and without philosophizing. For it is thy voice which commands me, it is the ordination of the spiritual world-plan concerning me, and the power by which I perform it is thy power. Whatsoever is commanded me by that voice, whatsoever is accomplished by this power, is surely and truly good in relation to that plan. I am calm in all the events of this world, for they occur in thy world. Nothing can deceive, or surprise, or make me afraid, so surely as thou livest and I behold thy life. For in thee and through thee, O infinite One, I behold even my present world in another light! Nature and natural consequences

in the destinies and actions of free beings, in view of thee, are empty, unmeaning words. There is no Nature more. Thou, thou alone, art.

It no longer appears to me the aim of the present world that the above-mentioned state of universal peace among men, and of their unconditioned empire over the mechanism of Nature, should be brought about merely that it may exist, but that it should be brought about by man himself, and, since it is calculated for all, then it should be brought about by all, as one great, free, moral community. Nothing new and better for the individual, except through his dutiful will, nothing new and better for the community, except through their united, dutiful will, is the fundamental law of the great moral kingdom of which the present life is a part.

The reason why the good-will of the individual is so often lost for this world, is that it is only the will of the individual, and that the will of the majority does not coincide with it; therefore it has no consequences but those which belong to a future world. Hence, even the passions and vices of men appear to coöperate in the promotion of a better state, *not in and for themselves*—in this sense good can never come out of evil—but by furnishing a counter-poise to opposite vices, and finally annihilating those vices and themselves by their preponderance. Oppression could never have gained the upper hand unless cowardice, and baseness, and mutual distrust had prepared the way for it. It will continue to increase until it eradicates cowardice and the slavish mind; and despair re-awakens the courage that was lost. Then the two antagonistic vices will have destroyed each other, and the noblest in all human relations, permanent freedom, will have come forth from them.

The actions of free beings have, strictly speaking, no other consequences than those which affect other free beings. For only in such, and for such, does a world exist; and that, wherein all agree, is the world. But they have consequences in free agents only by means of the infinite Will, by which all individuals exist. A call, a revelation of that Will to us, is always a requirement to perform some particular duty. Hence, even that which we call evil in the world, the consequence of the abuse of freedom, exists only through *him*; and it exists for all, for whom it exists, only so far as it imposes duties upon them. Did it not fall within the eternal plan of our moral education and the education of our whole race that precisely these duties should be laid upon us, they would not have been imposed; and that whereby they are imposed, and which we call evil, would never have been. In this view, everything which takes place is good, and absolutely accordant with the best ends. There is but one world possible—a thoroughly good one. Everything that occurs in this world conduces to the reformation and education of man, and, by means of that, to the furtherance of his earthly destination.

It is this higher world-plan that we call Nature, when we say Nature leads men through want to industry, through the evils of general disorder to a righteous polity, through the miseries of their perpetual wars to final, ever-during peace. Thy will, O Infinite, thy providence alone, is this higher Nature! This too is best understood by artless simplicity, which regards this life as a place of discipline and education, as a school for eternity; which, in all the fortunes it experiences, the most trivial as well as the most momentous, beholds thy ordinations designed for good; and which firmly believes that all things will work together for good to those who love their duty and know thee.

O truly have I spent the former days of my life in darkness! Truly have I heaped errors upon errors, and thought myself wise! Now only out of thy mouth, wondrous Spirit, I fully understand the doctrine which seemed so strange to me![3] although my understanding had nothing to oppose to it. For now only I overlook it, in its whole extent, in its deepest meaning, and in all its consequences.

Man is not a product of the world of the senses; and the end of his existence can never be attained in that world. His destination lies beyond time and space and all that pertains to the senses. He must know what he is and what he is to make himself. As his destination is sublime, so his thought must be able to lift itself above all the bounds of the senses. This must be his calling. Where his being is indigenous, there his thought must be indigenous also; and the most truly human view, that which

[3] An allusion to the second book.

alone befits him, that in which his whole power of thought is represented, is the view by which he lifts himself above those limits, by which all that is of the senses is changed for him into pure nothing, a mere reflection in mortal eyes of the alone enduring, non-sensuous.

Many have been elevated to this view without scientific thought, simply by their great heart and their pure moral instinct; because they lived especially with the heart, and in the sentiments. They denied, by their conduct, the efficacy and reality of the world of the senses; and in the shaping of their purposes and measures, they esteemed as nothing that concerning which they had not yet learned by thinking that it is nothing, even to thought. They who could say, "our citizenship is in heaven; we have here no permanent place, but seek one to come;" they whose first principle was, to die to the world and to be born anew, and, even here, to enter into another life—they, truly, placed not the slightest value upon all the objects of sense, and were, to use the language of the School, practical transcendental Idealists.

Others who, in addition to the sensuous activity which is native to us all, have, by their thought, confirmed themselves in the sensuous, become implicated, and, as it were, grown together with it; they can raise themselves permanently and perfectly above the sensuous only by continuing and carrying out their thought. Otherwise, with the purest moral intentions, they will still be drawn down again by their understanding, and their whole being will remain a continued and insoluble contradiction. For such, that philosophy, which I now first entirely understand, is the power by which Psyche first strips off her chrysalis, unfolds the wings on which she then hovers above herself, and casts one glance on the slough she has dropped, thenceforth to live and work in higher spheres.

Blessed be the hour in which I resolved to meditate on myself and my destination! All my questions are solved. I know what I can know, and I am without anxiety concerning that which I cannot know. I am satisfied. There is perfect harmony and clearness in my spirit, and a new and more glorious existence for that spirit begins.

My whole, complete destination, I do not comprehend. What I am called to be and shall be, surpasses all my thought. A part of this destination is yet hidden to me, visible only to him, the Father of Spirits, to whom it is committed. I know only that it is secured to me, and that it is eternal and glorious as himself. But that portion of it which is committed to me, I know. I know it entirely, and it is the root of all my other knowledge. I know, in every moment of my life, with certainty, what I am to do in that moment. And this is my whole destination, so far as it depends upon me. From this, since my knowledge goes no farther, I must not depart. I must not desire to know anything beyond it. I must stand fast in this one centre, and take root in it. All my scheming and striving, and all my faculty, must be directed to that. My whole existence must inweave itself with it.

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I raise myself to this viewpoint, and am a new creature. My whole relation to the existing world is changed. The threads by which my mind was heretofore bound to this world, and by whose mysterious traction it followed all the movements of this world, are forever severed, and I stand free —myself, my own world, peaceful and unmoved. No longer with the heart, with the eye alone, I seize the objects about me, and, through the eye alone, am connected with them. And this eye itself, made clearer by freedom, looks through error and deformity to the true and the beautiful; as, on the unmoved surface of the water, forms mirror themselves pure and with a softened light.

My mind is forever closed against embarrassment and confusion, against doubt and anxiety; my heart is forever closed against sorrow, and remorse, and desire. There is but one thing that I care to know: What I must do; and this I know, infallibly, always. Concerning all besides I know nothing, and I know that I know nothing; and I root myself fast in this my ignorance, and forbear to conjecture, to opine, to quarrel with myself concerning that of which I know nothing. No event in this world can move me to joy, and none to sorrow. Cold and unmoved I look down upon them all; for I know

that I cannot interpret one of them, nor discern its connection with that which is my only concern. Everything which takes place belongs to the plan of the eternal world, and is good in relation to that plan; so much I know. But what, in that plan, is pure gain, and what is only meant to remove existing evil, accordingly what I should most or least rejoice in, I know not. In his world everything succeeds. This suffices me, and in this faith I stand firm as a rock. But what in his world is only germ, what blossom, what the fruit itself, I know not. The only thing which can interest me is the progress of reason and morality in the kingdom of rational beings—and that purely for its own sake, for the sake of the progress. Whether *I* am the instrument of this progress or another, whether it is my act which succeeds or is thwarted, or whether it is the act of another, is altogether indifferent to me. I regard myself in every case but as one of the instruments of a rational design, and I honor and love myself, and am interested in myself, only as such; and I wish the success of my act only so far as it goes to accomplish that end. Therefore I regard all the events of this world in the same manner and only with exclusive reference to this one end—whether they proceed from me or from another, whether they relate to me immediately, or to others. My breast is closed against all vexation on account of personal mortifications and affronts, against all exaltation on account of personal merits; for my entire personality has long since vanished and been swallowed up in the contemplation of the end.

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Bodily sufferings, pain and sickness, should such befal me, I cannot avoid to feel, for they are events of my nature, and I am and remain nature here below. But they shall not trouble me. They affect only the Nature with which I am, in some strange way, connected; not myself, the being which is elevated above all Nature. The sure end of all pain, and of all susceptibility of pain, is death; and of all which the natural man is accustomed to regard as evil, this is the least so to me. Indeed, I shall not die for myself, but only for others, for those that remain behind, from whose connection I am severed. For myself, the hour of death is the hour of birth to a new and more glorious life.

Since my heart is thus closed to all desire for the earthly, since, in fact, I have no longer any heart for the perishable, the universe appears to my eye in a transfigured form. The dead inert mass which but choked up space has vanished; and, instead thereof, flows, and waves, and rushes the eternal stream of life, and power, and deed—of the original life, of thy life, O Infinite! For all life is thy life, and only the religious eye pierces to the kingdom of veritable beauty.

I am related to thee, and all that I behold around me is related to me. All is quick, all is soul, and gazes upon me with bright spirit-eyes, and speaks in spirit-tones to my heart. Most diversely sundered and severed, I behold, in all the forms without me, myself again, and beam upon myself from them, as the morning sun, in thousand dew-drops diversely refracted, glitters back toward itself.

Thy life, as the finite being can apprehend it, is volition which shapes and represents itself by means of itself alone. This life, made sensible in various ways to mortal eyes, flows through me and from me downward, through the immeasurable whole of Nature. Here it streams, as self-creating, self-fashioning matter, through my veins and muscles, and deposits its fulness outside of me, in the tree, in the plant, in the grass. As one connected stream, drop by drop, the forming life flows in all shapes and on all sides, wherever my eye can follow it, and looks upon me, from every point of the universe, with a different aspect, as the same force which fashions my own body in darkness and in secret. Yonder it waves free, and leaps and dances as self-forming motion in the brute; and, in every new body, represents itself as another separate, self-subsisting world—the same power which, invisible to me, stirs and moves in my own members. All that lives follows this universal current, this one principle of all movement, which transmits the harmonious concussion from one end of the universe to the other. The brute follows it without freedom. I, from whom, in the visible world, the movement proceeds (without, therefore, originating in me), follow it freely.

But, pure and holy, and near to thine own essence as aught, to mortal apprehension, can be, this thy life flows forth as a band which binds spirits with spirits in one, as air and ether of the one world of Reason, inconceivable and incomprehensible, and yet lying plainly revealed to the spiritual eye. Conducted by this light-stream, thought floats unrestrained and the same from soul to soul, and returns purer and transfigured from the kindred breast. Through this mystery the individual finds, and understands, and loves himself, only in another; and every spirit detaches itself only from other spirits; and there is no man, but only a Humanity; no isolated thinking, and loving, and hating, but only a thinking, and loving, and hating in and through one another. Through this mystery the affinity of spirits, in the invisible world, streams forth into their corporeal nature, and represents itself in two sexes, which, though every spiritual band could be severed, are still constrained, as natural beings, to love each other. It flows forth into the affection of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, as if the souls were sprung from one blood as well as the bodies—as if the minds were branches and blossoms of the same stem; and from thence it embraces, in narrower or wider circles, the whole sentient world. Even the hatred of spirits is grounded in thirst for love; and no enmity springs up, except from friendship denied.

Mine eye discerns this eternal life and motion, in all the veins of sensuous and spiritual Nature, through what seems to others a dead mass. And it sees this life forever ascend, and grow, and transfigure itself into a more spiritual expression of its own nature. The universe is no longer, to me, that circle which returns into itself, that game which repeats itself without ceasing, that monster which devours itself in order to reproduce itself as it was before. It is spiritualized to my contemplation, and bears the peculiar impress of the spirit—continual progress toward perfection, in a straight line which stretches into infinity.

The sun rises and sets, the stars vanish and return again, and all the spheres hold their cycle-dance. But they never return precisely such as they disappeared; and in the shining fountains of life there is also life and progress. Every hour which they bring, every morning and every evening, sinks down with new blessings on the world. New life and new love drop from the spheres, as dew-drops from the cloud, and embrace Nature, as the cool night embraces the earth.

All death in Nature is birth; and precisely in dying the sublimation of life appears most conspicuous. There is no death-bringing principle in Nature, for Nature is only life, throughout. Not death kills, but the more living life, which, hidden behind the old, begins and unfolds itself. Death and birth are only the struggle of life with itself to manifest itself in ever more transfigured form, more like itself.

And *my* death—can that be anything different from this?—I, who am not a mere representation and copy of life, but who bear within myself the original, the alone true and essential life! It is not a possible thought that Nature should annihilate a life which did not spring from her—Nature, which exists only for my sake, not I for hers.

But even my natural life, even this mere representation of an inward invisible life to mortal eyes, Nature cannot annihilate; otherwise she must be able to annihilate herself—she who exists only for me and for my sake, and who ceases to exist, if I am not. Even because she puts me to death she must quicken me anew. It can be only my higher life, unfolding itself in her, before which my present life disappears; and that which mortals call death is the visible appearing of a second vivification. Did no rational being, who has once beheld its light, perish from the earth, there would be no reason to expect a new heaven and a new earth. The only possible aim of Nature, that of representing and maintaining Reason, would have been already fulfilled here below, and her circle would be complete. But the act by which she puts to death a free, self-subsisting being, is her solemn—to all Reason apparent—transcending of that act, and of the entire sphere which she thereby closes. The apparition of death is the conductor by which my spiritual eye passes over to the new life of myself, and of a Nature for me.

Every one of my kind who passes from earthly connections, and who cannot, to my spirit, seem annihilated, because he is one of my kind, draws my thought over with him. He still is, and to him belongs a place.

While we, here below, sorrow for him with such sorrow as would be felt, if possible, in the dull kingdom of unconsciousness, when a human being withdraws himself from thence to the light of earth's sun—while we so mourn, on yonder side there is joy because a man is born into their world; as we citizens of earth receive with joy our own. When I, some time, shall follow them, there will be for me only joy; for sorrow remains behind, in the sphere which I quit.

It vanishes and sinks before my gaze—the world which I so lately admired. With all the fulness of life, of order, of increase, which I behold in it, it is but the curtain by which an infinitely more perfect world is concealed from me. It is but the germ out of which that infinitely more perfect shall unfold itself. My faith enters behind this curtain, and warms and quickens this germ. It sees nothing definite, but expects more than it can grasp here below, than it will ever be able to grasp in time.

So I live and so I am; and so I am unchangeable, firm and complete for all eternity. For this being is not one which I have received from without; it is my own only true being and essence.

ADDRESSES TO THE GERMAN NATION

(1807 to 1808)

TRANSLATED BY LOUIS H. GRAY, PH.D

ADDRESS EIGHT

The Definition of a Nation in the Higher Sense of the Word, and of Patriotism

The last four addresses have answered the question, What is the German as contrasted with other nations of Teutonic origin? The argument will be complete if we further add the examination of the question, What is a nation? The latter question is identical with another, and, at the same time, the other question, which has often been propounded and has been answered in very different ways, helps in the solution. This question is, What is patriotism, or, as it would be more correctly expressed, What is the love of the individual for his nation?

If we have thus far proceeded aright in the course of our investigation, it must become obvious therefrom that only the German—the primitive man, not he who has become petrified by arbitrary laws and institutions—really has a nation and is entitled to count on one, and that only he is capable of real and rational love for his nation.

We smooth our way to a solution of our proposed task by means of the following remark, which appears, at first sight, to lie outside the context of our previous discussion.

As we have already observed in our third address, religion is able absolutely to transport us above all time and above the whole of present and perceptual life without doing the least injury to the justice, morality, and holiness of the life influenced by this belief. Even with the certain conviction that all our activity on this earth will not leave the least trace behind it and will not produce the slightest results, and even with the belief that the divine may actually be perverse and may be used as a tool of evil and of still deeper moral corruption, it is, nevertheless, possible to continue in this activity simply in order to maintain the divine life that has come forth within us and that stands in relation to a higher governance of things in a future world where nothing perishes that has been done in God. Thus, for

instance, the apostles and the first Christians generally, even while living, were wholly transported above the earth because of their belief in heaven; and affairs terrestrial—state, fatherland, and nation—were so entirely renounced that they no longer deemed such trivial concerns worthy even of their consideration. However possible this may be, however easy, moreover, for faith, and however joyfully we may resign ourselves to the conviction, since it is unalterably the will of God, that we have no more an earthly country but are exiles and slaves here below—nevertheless, this is not the natural condition and the rule governing the course of the world, but is a rare exception. Moreover, it is a very perverse use of religion (and, among others, Christianity has frequently been guilty of it) when, as a question of principle and without regard to the existent circumstances, it proceeds to commend this withdrawal from the affairs of the state and of the nation as a truly religious sentiment. Under such conditions, if they are true and real and not perhaps induced merely by religious fanaticism, temporal life loses all its independence and becomes simply a fore-court of the true life and a hard trial to be borne only by obedience and submission to the will of God; in this view it becomes true that, as has been claimed by many, immortal souls have been plunged into earthly bodies, as into prisons, simply as a punishment. In the regular order of things, however, earthly life should itself truly be life in which we may rejoice and which we may thankfully enjoy, even though in expectation of a higher life; and although it is true that religion is also the comfort of the slave illegally oppressed, yet, above all things, the essence of religion is to oppose slavery and to prevent, so far as possible, its deterioration to a mere consolation of the captive. It is doubtless to the interest of the tyrant to preach religious resignation and to refer to heaven those to whom he will not grant a tiny place on earth; we must, however, be less hasty to adopt the view of religion recommended by the tyrant, for, if we can, we must forestall the making of earth into hell in order to arouse a still greater longing for heaven.

The natural impulse of man, to be surrendered only in case of real necessity, is to find heaven already on this earth and to amalgamate into his earthly work day by day that which lasts forever; to plant and to cultivate the imperishable in the temporal itself—not merely in an unconceivable way, connected with the eternal solely by the gulf which mortal eyes may not pass, but in a manner which is visible to the mortal eye itself.

That I may begin with this generally intelligible example—what noble-minded man does not wish and aspire to repeat his own life in better wise in his children and, again, in their children, and still to continue to live upon this earth, ennobled and perfected in their lives, long after he is dead; to wrest from mortality the spirit, the mind, and the character with which in his day he perchance put perversity and corruption to flight, established uprightness, aroused sluggishness, and uplifted dejection, and to deposit these, as his best legacy to posterity, in the spirits of his survivors, in order that, in their turn, they may again bequeath them equally adorned and augmented? What noble-minded man does not wish, by act or thought, to sow a seed for the infinite and eternal perfecting of his race; to cast into Time something new and hitherto non-existent, which may abide there and become the unfailing source of new creations; to repay, for his place on this earth and for the short span of life vouchsafed him, something that shall last forever even here on earth—to the end that he as an individual, even though unnamed by history (since thirst for fame is contemptible vanity), may leave behind in his own consciousness and in his own belief manifest tokens that he himself existed? What noble-minded man does not wish this, I asked; yet the world is to be considered as organized only in accordance with the requirements of those who thus view themselves as the norm of how all men should be. It is for their sakes alone that the world exists! They are indeed its kernel; and those who think otherwise must be regarded as merely a part of the transitory world so long as they reason on so low a plane, for they exist merely for the sake of the noble-minded and must accommodate themselves to the latter until they have risen to their height.

What, now, could it be that might give solid foundation to this challenge and to this belief of the noble in the eternity and the imperishability of his work? Obviously, only an order of things which he could recognize as eternal in itself and as capable of receiving eternal elements within itself. Such

an order is, however, the special, spiritual nature of human surroundings, which can, it is true, be comprised in no concept, but which is, nevertheless, truly present—the surroundings from which he has himself come forth with all his thought and activity and with his faith in their eternity—the nation from which he is descended, amid which he was educated and grew up to what he now is. For however undoubtedly true it may be that his work, if he rightly lays claim to its eternity, is in no wise the mere result of the spiritual, natural law of his nation, simply merging into this result—no, it must be thought of as an element greater than that—a something which flows immediately from the primitive and divine life. Nevertheless, it is equally true that this something more, immediately after its formation as a visible phenomenon, has subordinated itself to that special spiritual law of nature, has acquired a perceptual expression only in accordance with that law. Under this same natural law, so long as this nation endures, all further revelations of the divine will also appear and be formed within it. Yet, through the fact that the man existed and so labored, this law itself is further determined, and his activity has become a permanent component of it; everything subsequent will likewise be compelled to adapt itself accordingly and to conform to the law in question. And thus he is made certain that the culture which he has achieved remains with his nation for all time and becomes a permanent basis of determination for all its further development.

In the higher conception of the word considered in general from the viewpoint of an insight into a spiritual world, a nation is this: The totality of human beings living together in society and constantly perpetuating themselves both bodily and spiritually; and this totality stands altogether under a certain specific law through which the divine develops itself. The universality of this specific law is what binds this multitude into a natural totality, inter-penetrated by itself, in the eternal world, and, for that very reason, in the temporal world as well. The law itself, in its essence, can be generally comprehended as we have applied it to the case of the Germans as a primal nation; through consideration of the phenomena of such a nation it may be even more exactly grasped in many of its further determinations; yet it can never be entirely understood by any one who, unknown to himself, personally remains continually under its influence; it may in general, however, be clearly perceived that such a law exists. This law is a surplus of the figurative which amalgamates directly with the surplus of the unfigurative primitiveness in the phenomenon, and thus, precisely in the phenomenon, both are then no longer separable. That law absolutely determines and completes what has been called the national character of a people—the law, namely, of the development of the primitive and of the divine. From the latter it is clear that men who do not in the least believe in a primitive being and in a further development of it, but simply in an eternal circle of visible life, and who, through their belief, become what they believe, are no nation whatsoever in the higher sense; and since they do not, strictly speaking, actually exist, they are equally powerless to possess a national character.

The belief of the noble-minded man in the eternal continuance of his activity, even upon this earth, is based, accordingly, on the hope for the eternal continuance of the nation from which he has himself developed, and of its individuality in accordance with that hidden law, without intermixture and corruption by any alien element and by what does not appertain to the totality of this legislation. This individuality is the permanent element to which he intrusts the eternity of himself and of his continued action—the eternal order of things in which he lays his perpetuity. He must desire its continuance, for it is alone the releasing agency whereby the brief span of his life here is extended to a continuous life upon the earth. His belief and his endeavor to plant what shall not pass away, and the concept in which he comprehends his own life as an eternal life, constitute the bond which most intimately associates with himself, first, his own nation and, through that, the entire human race—which brings the needs of them all, to the end of time, into his broadened heart. This is his love for his nation, and through it, first, he respects, trusts, rejoices in it, and takes pride in his descent from it; the Divine has appeared in it, and has deigned to make it his covering and his means of direct communication with the world; the Divine, therefore, will continue to break forth from it. Therefore man is, secondly, active, efficacious, and self-sacrificing for his nation. Life, simply as life, as a

continuance of changing existence, has certainly never possessed value for him apart from this—he has desired it merely as the source of the permanent. This permanence, however, alone promises him the independent continuance of the existence of his nation; and to save this he must even be willing to die that it may live, and that in it he may live the only life that has ever been possible to him.

Thus it is. Love, to be really love, and not merely a transitory desire, never clings to the perishable, but is awakened and kindled by, and based upon, the eternal only. Man is not even able to love himself unless he consider himself as eternal; moreover, he cannot even esteem and approve himself. Still less can he love anything outside himself, except, that is, that he receive it within the eternity of his belief and of his soul, and connect it with this eternity. He who does not, first of all, regard himself as eternal, has no love whatever, nor can he, moreover, love a fatherland, since nothing of the sort exists for him. It is true that he who, perchance, regards his invisible life as eternal, but who does not, therefore, esteem his visible life as eternal in the same sense, may perhaps have a heaven, and in this his fatherland, but here on earth he has no fatherland; for this also is seen only under the metaphor of eternity and, indeed, of visible eternity, rendered perceptible to the senses; moreover, he cannot, therefore, love his fatherland. If such a man has none, he is to be pitied; but he to whom one has been given, and in whose soul heaven and earth, the invisible and the visible, interpenetrate, and thus for the first time create a true and worthy heaven, fights to the last drop of his blood again to transmit the precious possession undiminished to posterity.

Thus has it been from time immemorial, though it has not been expressed from time immemorial with this generality and with this clearness. What inspired the noble spirits among the Romans, whose sentiments and mode of thought still live and breathe among us in their monuments, to struggle and to sacrifice, to endure and be patient, for their fatherland? They themselves state it frequently and clearly. It was their firm belief in the eternal continuance of their Rome, and their confident expectation of themselves continuing to live in this eternity. In so far as this conviction had foundation, and in so far as they themselves would have grasped it if they had been perfectly clear within themselves, it never deceived them.

Unto this day what was really eternal in their eternal Rome lives on and they with it in our midst, and it will continue to live, in its results, until the end of time.

In this sense—as the vehicle and the pledge of earthly eternity, and the interpretation of the eternal here—nation and fatherland far transcend the State in the ordinary sense of the term social organization, as this is conceived in its simple, clear connotation, and as it is founded and maintained in accordance with this conception—a conception which demands sure justice and internal peace, and requires that every one through his efforts obtain his support and the prolongation of his sentient existence so long as God will grant it to him. All this is only a means, a condition, and a scaffolding of what patriotism really means—the development of the eternal and the divine in the world, which is ever to become purer, more perfect in infinite progression. For that very reason this patriotism must, first of all, rule the State itself as absolutely the highest, ultimate, and independent authority, by limiting it in the choice of means for its immediate purpose—inner peace. To reach this goal, the natural freedom of the individual must be limited in many ways, it is true; and if this were absolutely the only consideration and intention regarding them, it would be well to restrict this liberty as closely as possible, in order to bring all their movements under one uniform rule, and to keep them under constant supervision. Granted that such severity be necessary, it could at least do no harm for this single end; only the higher concept of the human race and of the nations widens this limited view. Even in the manifestations of external life freedom is the soil in which the higher culture germinates; a legislation which keeps this later aim in view will give the broadest possible scope to freedom, even at the risk that a less degree of uniform quiet and calm may result, and that government may become a little more difficult and laborious.

To elucidate this by an example—it has been known to happen that nations have been told to their faces that they did not require as much freedom as many other nations do. This statement might,

indeed, be dictated by forbearance and a desire to palliate, the true meaning being that they were utterly unable to endure so great freedom and that only a high degree of rigidity could prevent them from destroying one another. If, however, the words are taken as they are spoken, they are true under the presupposition that such a nation is entirely incapable of the natural life and of the impulse toward it. Such a nation—in case such a one, in which some few of the nobler sort did not make an exception to the general rule, were possible—would indeed require no freedom whatever, since this is only for the higher ends which transcend the State; it requires simply taming and training in order that the individuals may live peaceably side by side, and that the whole may be made an efficient means for arbitrary ends which lie outside its proper sphere. We need not decide whether this may truthfully be said of any nation whatever; but this much is clear, that a primitive nation requires freedom, that this freedom is the pledge of its persistence as a primitive people, and that, as it continues, it bears, without any danger, an ever ascending degree of freedom. And this is the first example of the necessity of patriotism governing the state itself.

It must, then, be patriotism which governs the state in that it sets for it itself a higher end than the ordinary one of the maintenance of the internal peace, of the property, of the personal freedom, of the life, and of the well-being of all. Solely for this higher end, and with no other intention, the state assembles an armed force. When the problem of the application of this armed force arises, when it is a question of hazarding all the aims of the state in the abstract-property, personal freedom, life, welfare, and the continuance of the state itself—when, answerable to God alone, they are called upon to decide without a clear and rational conception of the sure attainment of the end in view, which in matters of this sort it is never possible to gain—then only the true primitive life holds the rudder of the state, and here for the first time enters the true sovereign right of the government, like God, to imperil the lower life for the sake of the higher. In the maintenance of the traditional organization, of the laws, and of civic welfare, there is absolutely no genuine life and no primitive decision. Circumstances and situations, legislators who have perhaps long been dead, have created those things; succeeding ages go trustingly forward in the road they have entered, and thus, as a matter of fact, they do not live a public life of their own, but merely repeat a former. In such periods there is no need of a real government. If, however, this uniform progress is imperiled, and the problem arises of deciding with reference to new cases, then a life is required which has its roots in itself. What spirit is it, now, which in such cases may take its place at the helm, which is able to decide with individual certainty and without uneasy wavering, and which has an indubitable right authoritatively to lay demands upon every one who may be concerned, whether he will or not, and to compel the recalcitrant to imperil everything, even to his life? Not the spirit of calm civilian love for the constitution and the laws, but the burning flame of the higher patriotism which regards the nation as the veil of the eternal, for which the noble joyfully sacrifices himself, and for which the ignoble, who exists only for the sake of the noble, should also sacrifice himself! It is not that civilian love for the constitution, for this is absolutely incapable of such action if it is founded on reason only.

Whatever may be the outcome, since governance is not unrewarded, some one will always be found to take charge of it. Let the new ruler even favor slavery (and in what does slavery consist except in contempt and suppression of the individuality of a primitive people?), since advantage may be derived from the life of slaves, from their number, and even from their welfare, then slavery will be endurable under him provided he is a calculator to any extent. They will at least always find life and support. Why, then, should they thus struggle? According to both of them, it is peace which transcends everything in their opinion, but this is disturbed only by the continuance of the struggle. The slave, therefore, puts forth every effort to end it quickly; he will yield and submit—and why should he not? He never had a higher purpose, and he has never expected anything more from life than the continuance of his existence under endurable conditions. The promise of a life lasting, even here, beyond the duration of earthly life—this alone is what can inspire him to death for the fatherland.

Thus it has always been. Wheresoever real government has existed, where serious struggles have been fought out, where victory has been won against mighty resistance, it has been the promise of eternal life that governed and fought and conquered. The German Protestants, formerly mentioned in these addresses, fought with faith in this promise. Did they not perhaps know that nations might also be governed with the old faith and be held in legal order, and that a good livelihood might be found under this faith also? Why, then, did their princes thus determine upon armed resistance, and why did their peoples lend themselves to it with enthusiasm? It was heaven and eternal happiness for which they gladly shed their blood. Yet what earthly power could then have penetrated into the inmost sanctuary of their souls and have been able to eradicate the faith which had now once sprung up within them, and on which alone they based their hope of salvation? It was not, therefore, their own happiness for which they struggled—of that they were already assured; it was the happiness of their children, of their grandchildren still unborn, and of all posterity. These, too, should be brought up in the same doctrine which alone seemed to them to bring salvation; they, too, should share in the salvation which had dawned for them. It was this hope alone that was threatened by the foe; for that hope, for an order of things which should bloom above their graves long after they were dead, they shed their blood thus joyfully. If we grant that they were not entirely clear to themselves, that in their designation of the noblest they verbally mistook what was within them, and with their mouths did injustice to their souls; if we willingly acknowledge that their confession of faith was not the sole and exclusive means of attaining heaven beyond the grave—yet, this, at least, is eternally true that more heaven on this side of the grave, a more courageous and more joyous lifting of the gaze above the earth, and a freer impulse of spirit have come through their sacrifice into all the life of succeeding ages; and the descendants of their opponents, as well as we ourselves, their own descendants, enjoy the fruits of their labors unto this day.

In this belief our oldest common ancestors, the parent nation of civilization, the Teutons whom the Romans called Germans, boldly opposed the advancing world-dominion of the Romans. Did they not then see before their eyes the higher bloom of the Roman provinces near them, the more refined enjoyments in them, and, in addition, laws, judgment-seats, rods, and axes in superabundance? Were not the Romans willing enough to allow them to share in all these blessings? Did they not experience, in the case of several of their own princes who had allowed themselves to be persuaded that war against such benefactors of humanity was rebellion, proofs of the lauded Roman clemency, since Rome adorned these submissive lords with kingly titles, with generalships in their armies, and with Roman fillets, and gave them, if, perchance, they had been driven out by their compatriots, maintenance and a place of refuge in their colonies? Had they no feeling for the advantages of Roman culture, as, for example, for the better organization of their armies, in which even an Arminius did not disdain to learn the trade of war? None of all these ignorances or negligences is to be charged against them. Their descendents even adopted the culture of the Romans as soon as they could do it without loss of their freedom and in so far as it was possible without impairment of their individuality. Why did they, then, thus struggle for several generations in sanguinary war, ever renewed with the same virulence? A Roman author makes their leaders ask "whether anything was then left for them except either to assert their freedom or to die before they became slaves?" Freedom meant to them that they remained Germans, that they continued to decide their affairs independently, in conformity with their national genius, and, likewise in conformity with this spirit, that they continued to go forward in their development and transmitted this independence to their posterity; slavery meant to them all the blessings which the Romans offered them, because in that case they must be something else than Germans—they might be half Romans. It is self-evident, they presuppose, that every one would rather die than become thus, and that a true German can wish to live only that he may be and remain forever a German and may train all that belong to him to be Germans also.

They have not all died; they have not seen slavery; they have bequeathed liberty to their children. All the modern world owes it to their stubborn resistance that it exists as it does. If the Romans

had succeeded in subjugating them also and, as the Roman everywhere did, in eradicating them as a nation, then the entire future development of mankind would have taken a direction that we cannot imagine would have been more pleasant. We, the immediate heirs of their land, their language, and their thought, owe it to them that we be still Germans, that the stream of primitive and independent life still bear us on; to them we owe everything that we have since become as a nation; and, unless we have now perhaps come to an end, and unless the last drop of blood inherited from them is dried up in our veins, we shall owe to them all that we shall be in the future. Even the other Teutonic races, among whom are our brethren, and who have now become foreigners to us, owe to them their existence; when they conquered eternal Rome, no one of all these nations yet existed; at that time the possibility of their future origin was simultaneously won in the struggle.

These, and all others in universal history who have been of their type of thought, have conquered because the eternal inspired them, and thus this inspiration ever and of necessity prevails over him who is not inspired. It is not the might of arms nor the fitness of weapons that wins victories, but the power of the soul. He who sets himself a limited goal for his sacrifices, and who can dare no further than a certain point, surrenders resistance as soon as the danger reaches a crisis where he cannot yield or dodge. He who has set himself no limit whatsoever, but who hazards everything, even life—the highest boon that can be lost on earth—never ceases to resist, and, if his opponent has a more limited goal, he indubitably conquers. A people that is capable, though it be only in its highest representatives and leaders, of keeping firmly before its vision independence, the face from the spirit world, and of being inspired with love for it, as were our remotest forefathers, surely conquers a people that, like the Roman armies, is used merely as a tool for foreign dominion and for the subjugation of independent nations; for the former have everything to lose, the latter have merely something to gain. But even a whim can prevail over the mental attitude which regards war as a game of hazard for temporal gain or loss, and which, even before the game starts, has fixed the limit of the stake. Think, for example, of a Mohammed—not the real Mohammed of history, concerning whom I confess that I have no judgment, but the Mohammed of a distinguished French poet—who had once become firmly convinced that he was one of the extraordinary natures who are called to guide the obscure and common folk of earth, and to whom, in consequence of this first presupposition, all his whims, however meagre and limited they may really be, must necessarily appear to be great, exalted and inspiring ideas because they are his own, while everything that opposes them must seem obscure, common folk, enemies of their own weal, evil-minded, and hateful. Such a man, in order to justify this self-conceit to himself as a divine vocation, and entirely absorbed in this thought, must stake everything upon it, nor can he rest until he has trampled under foot all that will not think as highly of him as he does himself, or until his own belief in his divine mission is reflected from the whole contemporary world. I shall not say what would be his fortunes in case a spiritual vision that is true and clear within itself should actually come against him on the field of battle, but he certainly wins from those limited gamblers, for he hazards everything against those who do not so hazard; no spirit inspires them, but he is altogether inspired by a fanatical spirit—that of his mighty and powerful self-conceit.

It follows from all this that the state, as mere governance of human life proceeding in its normal peaceable course, is not a primal thing and one existing for itself, but that it is simply the means to the higher end of the eternally uniform development of the purely human in this nation; that it is only the vision and the love of this eternal development which is continually to guide the higher outlook upon the administration of the state, even in periods of calm, and which alone can save the independence of the nation when this is endangered. In the case of the Germans, among whom, as being a primitive people, this love of country was possible and, as we firmly believe, has actually existed hitherto, such patriotism could, up to our own time, count with a high degree of certainty upon the safety of its most important interests. As was the case only among the Greeks in antiquity, among the Germans the State and the nation were actually severed from each other, and each was

represented separately; the former in the individual German kingdoms and principalities; the latter visibly in the Federation of the Empire, and invisibly—valid not in consequence of written law but as a sequence of a law living in the hearts of all, and in its results striking the eyes at every turn—in a multitude of customs and institutions. As far as the German language extended, every one who saw the light within its domain could regard himself as a citizen in a two-fold sense, partly of his natal city, to whose immediate protection he was recommended; and partly of the entire common fatherland of the German nation. Throughout the whole extent of this fatherland each man might seek for himself that culture which was most akin to his spirit, or he might search for the sphere of activity most suited for it; and talent did not grow into its place, like a tree, but he was permitted to search for that place. He who became estranged from his immediate surroundings through the direction taken by his culture, easily found welcome reception elsewhere; he found new friends instead of those whom he had lost; he found time and quiet in which to explain himself more accurately and perhaps to win over and to reconcile the wrathful themselves, and thus to unite the whole. No German-born prince could ever bring himself to mark off the fatherland of his subjects within the mountains or rivers where he ruled, and to regard them as bound to the soil. A truth which could not be uttered in one place might be proclaimed in another, where, perhaps, on the contrary, those truths were forbidden which were allowable in the former district; and thus, despite many instances of partiality and narrow-mindedness in the individual states, in Germany, taken as a whole, was found the utmost freedom of investigation and of communication that ever a nation possessed. Higher culture was, and remained on every hand, the result of the reciprocity of the citizens of all German states, and this higher culture then gradually descended in this form to the greater masses, who, consequently, have always, on the whole, continued to educate themselves. As has been said, no German with a German heart, placed at the head of a government, has ever diminished this essential pledge of the continuance of a German nation; and even though, in view of other primitive decisions, what the higher German patriotism must desire was not invariably to be effected, yet at least there was no direct opposition to its interests; no effort was made to undermine that love, to eradicate it, and to replace it by an antagonistic love.

But if, now, the original guidance both of that higher culture and of the national power—which should be used only in behalf of that culture and to further its continuance—the employment of German wealth and German blood is to pass from the supremacy of the German spirit to that of another, what would then necessarily result?

Here is the place where there is special need of applying the policy which we outlined in our first address, namely, to be unwilling to be deceived in regard to our own interest, and to have the courage willingly to see the truth and acknowledge it. Moreover, it is still permissible, so far as I know, to talk with one another in German about our fatherland, or at least to sigh in German, and, I believe, we should not do well if we ourselves precipitated such an interdiction and wished to lay the fetters of individual timidity on the courage which, no doubt, will already have considered the risk of the venture.

Well then, picture to yourself the presupposed new régime to be as kind and as benevolent as you will; make it good as God; will you also be able to invest it with divine understanding? Even though it may, in all earnestness, desire the highest happiness and welfare of all, will the best welfare that it can comprehend also be the welfare of Germany? I accordingly hope that I shall be perfectly understood in reference to the main point that I have presented to you today; I hope that in the course of my remarks many have thought and felt that I merely express clearly in words what has always lain within their hearts; I hope the same will be the case with the other Germans who will some day read this address. Several Germans have said approximately the same things before me, and that sentiment has lain obscurely at the basis of the opposition continually manifested against a merely mechanical establishment and estimate of the State. And now I challenge all who are acquainted with modern foreign literature to prove to me what later sage, poet, or lawgiver among them has ever given birth to a prophetic thought similar to this, which regarded the human race as being in continual progress,

and which correlated all its temporal activity only with this progress; whether any one of them, even in the period when they soared most boldly to political creation, demanded from the state more than equality, internal peace, external national fame, and, when their demands reached the extreme limit, domestic happiness? If this is their highest conception, as must be deduced from all that has been said, they can attribute to us likewise no higher needs and no higher demands upon life, and—always presupposing those beneficent sentiments toward us and an absence of all selfishness and of all desire to be more than we—they believe that they have made admirable provision for us when they give us all that they alone recognize as desirable. On the other hand, that for which alone the nobler soul among us can live is then eradicated from public life, and the people, who have always shown themselves receptive toward the impulses of higher things, and the majority of whom, it might be hoped, could even be raised to that nobility, are—in so far as it is treated as they wish it to be treated—abased beneath its rank, dishonored, and blotted out, since it coalesces with the populace of the baser sort.

If, now, those higher claims upon life, together with the sense of their divine right, still remain living and potent in any one, he, with deep indignation, feels himself crushed back into those first ages of Christianity in which it was said: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." And rightly so, for as long as he still sees a cloak upon thee, he seeks an opportunity to quarrel with thee in order to take this also from thee; not until thou art utterly naked dost thou escape his attention and art unmolested by him. Even his higher feelings, which do him honor, make earth a hell and an abomination to him; he wishes that he had not been born; he wishes that his eyes may close to the light of day, the sooner the better; unceasing sorrow lays hold upon his days until the grave claims him; he can wish for those dear to him no better gift than a quiet and contented spirit, that with less pain they may live on in expectation of an eternal life beyond the grave.

These addresses lay upon you the task of preventing, by the sole means which still remains after the others have been tried in vain, the destruction of every nobler impulse that may in the future possibly arise among us and this debasement of our entire nation. They present to you a true and omnipotent patriotism, which, in the conception of our nation as of one that is eternal, and as citizens of our own eternity, is to be deeply and ineradicably founded in the minds of all, by means of education. What this education may be, and in what way it may be achieved, we shall see in the following addresses.

* * * * *

ADDRESS FOURTEEN

Conclusion of the Whole

The addresses which I here conclude have, indeed, been directed primarily to you,[4] but they had in view the entire German nation; and, in intention, they have gathered about them, in the space wherein you visibly breathe, all that would be capable of understanding them as far as the German tongue extends. Should I have succeeded in casting into any bosom throbbing before my eyes some sparks which may glimmer on and take life, it is not in my thought that they remain solitary and alone, but, traversing the whole ground in common, I would gather about them similar sentiments and purposes and weld them so unitedly that a continuous and coherent flame of patriotic thought might spread and be enkindled from this centre over the soil of the fatherland and to its furthest bounds. My addresses have not been directed to this generation for the pastime of idle ears and eyes,

[4] The audience gathered in the building of the Royal Academy at Berlin.—ED.

but I desire at last to know—even as every one who is like-minded should know—whether there is anything outside us that is akin to our type of thought. Every German who still believes that he is a member of a nation, who thinks of it in grand and noble fashion, who hopes in it, and who dares, suffers, and endures for it, should at last be torn from the uncertainty of his belief; he should clearly discern whether he is right or whether he is only a fool and a fanatic; henceforth he should either continue his path with sure and joyous consciousness, or, with healthy resolution, should renounce a fatherland here below and comfort himself solely with that which is in heaven. To you, therefore, not as such-and-such persons in our daily and circumscribed life, but as representatives of the nation, and, through your ears, to the nation as a whole, these addresses appeal.

Centuries have passed since you have been convened as you are today—in such numbers, in so great, so insistent, so mutual an interest, so absolutely as a nation and as Germans. Never again will you be so bidden. If you do not listen now and examine yourselves, if you again let these addresses pass you by as an empty tickling of the ears or as a strange prodigy, no human being will longer take account of you. Hear at last for once; for once at last reflect! Only do not go this time from the spot without having made a firm resolve; let every one who hears this voice make this resolution within himself and for himself, even as though he were alone and must do everything alone. If very many individuals think thus, there will soon be a great whole uniting into a single, close-knit power. If, on the contrary, each one, excluding himself, relies on the rest and relinquishes the affair to others, then there are no others at all, for, even though combined, all remain just as they were before. Make it on the spot—this resolution! Do not say, "Yet a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," until, perchance, improvement shall come of itself. It will never come of itself. He who has once missed the opportunity of yesterday, when clear perception would have been easier, will not be able to make up his mind today, and will certainly be even less able to do so tomorrow. Every delay only makes us still more inert and but lulls us more and more into gentle acquiescence to our wretched plight. Neither could the external stimulations to reflection ever be stronger and more insistent, for surely he whom these present conditions do not arouse has lost all feeling. You have been called together to make a last, determined resolution and decision—not by any means to give commands and mandates to others, or to depute others to do the work for you. No, my purpose is to urge you to do the work yourself. In this connection that idle passing of resolutions, the will to will, some time or other, are not sufficient, nor is it enough to remain sluggishly satisfied until self-improvement sets in of its own accord. On the contrary, from you is demanded a determination which is identical with action and with life itself, and which will continue and control, unwavering and unchilled, until it gains its goal.

Or is perchance the root, from which alone can grow a tenacity of purpose which takes hold upon life, utterly eradicated and vanished within you? Or is your whole being actually rarefied into a hollow shade, devoid of sap and blood and of individual power of movement, or dissolved to a dream in which, indeed, a motley array of faces arise and busily cross one another, but the body lies stiff and dead? Long since it has been openly proclaimed to our generation and repeated under every guise, that this is very nearly its condition. Its spokesmen have believed that this was declared merely in insult, and have regarded themselves as challenged to return the insults, thinking that thus the affair would resume its natural course. As for the rest, there was not the slightest trace of change or of improvement. If you have heard this, and if it was capable of rousing your indignation—well then, through your very actions, give the lie to those who thus think and speak of you. Once show yourselves to be different before the eyes of all the world, and before the eyes of all the world they will be convicted of their falsehood. It may be that they have spoken thus harshly of you with the precise intention of forcing this refutation from you, and because they despaired of any other means of arousing you. How much better, then, would have been their intentions toward you than were the purposes of those who flattered you that you might be kept in sluggish calm and in careless thoughtlessness!

However weak and powerless you may be, during this period clear and calm reflection has been vouchsafed you as never before. What really plunged us into confusion regarding our position, into thoughtlessness, into a blind way of letting things go, was our sweet complacency with ourselves and our mode of existence. Things had thus gone on hitherto, and so they continued and would continue to go. If any one challenged us to reflect, we triumphantly showed him, instead of any other refutation, our continued existence which went on without any thought or effort on our part; yet things flowed along simply because we were not put to the test. Since that time we have passed through the ordeal and it might be supposed that the deceptions, the delusions, and the false consolations with which we all misguided one another would have collapsed! The innate prejudices which, without proceeding from this point or from that, spread over all like a natural cloud and wrapped all in the same mist, ought surely, by this time, to have utterly vanished! That twilight no longer obscures our eyes, and can therefore no longer serve for an excuse. Now we stand, naked and bare, stripped of all alien coverings and draperies, simply as ourselves. Now it must appear what each self is, or is not.

Some one among you might come forward and ask me "What gives you in particular, the only one among all German men and authors, the special task, vocation, and prerogative of convening us and inveighing against us? Would not any one among the thousands of the writers of Germany have exactly the same right to do this as you have? None of them does it; you alone push yourself forward." I answer that each one would, indeed, have had the same right as I, and that I do it for the very reason that no one among them has done it before me; that I would be silent if any one else had spoken previous to me. This was the first step toward the goal of a radical amelioration, and some one must take it. I seemed to be the first vividly to perceive this—accordingly, it was I who first took it. After this, a second step will be taken, and thereto every one has now the same right; but, as a matter of fact, it, in its turn, will be taken by but one individual. One man must always be the first, and let him be he who can!

Without anxiety regarding this circumstance, let your attention rest for an instant on the consideration to which we have previously led you—in how enviable a position Germany and the world would be if the former had known how to utilize the good fortune of her position and to recognize her advantage. Let your eyes rest upon what they both are now, and let your minds be penetrated by the pain and indignation which, in this reflection, must lay hold upon every noble soul. Then examine yourselves and see that it is you who can release the age from the errors of ancient times, and that, if only you will permit it, your own eyes can be cleared of the mist that covers them; learn, too, that it has been vouchsafed to you, as to no generation before you, to undo what has been done and to efface the dishonorable interval from the annals of the German nation.

Let the various conditions among which you must choose pass before you. If you drift along in your torpor and your heedlessness, all the evils of slavery await you—deprivations, humiliations, the scorn and arrogance of the conqueror; you will be pushed about from pillar to post, because you have never found your proper niche, until, through the sacrifice of your nationality and of your language, you slip into some subordinate place where your nation shall sink its identity. If, on the other hand, you rouse yourselves, you will find, first of all, an enduring and honorable existence, and will behold a flourishing generation which promises to you and to the Germans the most glorious and lasting memory. Through the instrumentality of this new generation you will see in spirit the German name exalted to the most glorious among all nations; you will discern in this nation the regenerator and restorer of the world.

It depends upon you whether you will be the last of a dishonorable race, even more surely despised by posterity than it deserves, and in whose history—if there can be any history in the barbarism which will then begin—succeeding generations will rejoice when it perishes and will praise fate that it is just; or whether you will be the beginning and the point of development of a new age which will be glorious beyond all your expectations, and become those from whom posterity will date the year of their salvation. Bethink yourselves that you are the last in whose power this great change

lies. You have heard the Germans called a unit; you have still a visible sign of their unity—an Empire and an Imperial League—or you have heard of it; among you even yet, from time to time, voices have been audible which were inspired by this higher patriotism. After you become accustomed to other concepts and will accept alien forms and a different course of occupation and of life—how long will it then be before no one longer lives who has seen Germans or who has heard of them?

What is demanded of you is not much. You should only keep before you the necessity of pulling yourselves together for a little time and of reflecting upon what lies immediately and obviously before your eyes. You should merely form for yourselves a fixed opinion regarding this situation, remain true to it, and utter and express it in your immediate surroundings. It is the presupposition, yea, it is our firm conviction, that this reflection will lead to the same result in all of you; that, if you only seriously consider, and do not continue in your previous heedlessness, you will think in harmony; and that, if you can bring your intelligence to bear, and if only you do not continue to vegetate, unanimity and unity of spirit will come of themselves. If, however, matters once reach this point, all else that we need will result automatically.

This reflection is, moreover, demanded from each one of you who can still consider for himself something lying obviously before his eyes. You have time for this; events will not take you unawares; the records of the negotiations conducted with you will remain before your eyes. Lay them not from your hands until you are in unity with your selves. Neither let, oh, let not yourselves be made supine by reliance upon others or upon anything whatsoever that lies outside yourselves, nor yet through the unintelligent belief of our time that the epochs of history are made by the agency of some unknown power without any aid from man. These addresses have never wearied in impressing upon you that absolutely nothing can help you but yourselves, and they find it necessary to repeat this to the last moment. Rain and dew, fruitful or unfruitful years, may indeed be made by a power which is unknown to us and is not under our control; but only men themselves—and absolutely no power outside them—give to each epoch its particular stamp. Only when they are all equally blind and ignorant do they fall the victims of this hidden power, though it is within their own control not to be blind and ignorant. It is true that to whatever degree, greater or less, things may go ill with us, in part depends upon that unknown power; but far more is it dependent upon the intelligence and the good will of those to whom we are subjected. Whether, on the other hand, it will ever again be well with us depends wholly upon ourselves; and surely nevermore will any welfare whatsoever come to us unless we ourselves acquire it for ourselves—especially unless each individual among us toils and labors in his own way as though he were alone and as though the salvation of future generations depended solely upon him.

This is what you have to do; and these addresses adjure you to do this without delay.

They adjure you, young men! I, who have long since ceased to belong to you, maintain—and I have also expressed my conviction in these addresses—that you are yet more capable of every thought transcending the commonplace, and are more easily aroused to all that is good and great, because your time of life still lies closer to the years of childish innocence and of nature. Very differently does the majority of the older generation regard this fundamental trait in you. It accuses you of arrogance, of a rash, presumptuous judgment which soars beyond your strength, of obstinacy, and of desire of innovation; yet it merely smiles good-naturedly at these, your errors. All this, it thinks, is based simply on your lack of knowledge of the world, that is, of universal human corruption, since it has eyes for nothing else on earth. You are now supposed to have courage only because you hope to find helpmates like-minded with yourselves and because you do not know the grim and stubborn resistance which will be opposed to your projects of improvement. When the youthful fire of your imagination shall once have vanished, when you shall have perceived the universal selfishness, idleness, and horror of work, when you yourselves shall once rightly have tasted the sweetness of plodding on in the customary rut—then the desire to be better and wiser than all others will soon fade away. They do not by any chance entertain these good expectations of you in imagination alone; they have found them confirmed in their own persons. They must confess that in the days of their foolish youth they

dreamed of improving the world, exactly as you dream today; yet with increasing maturity they have become tame and quiet as you see them now. I believe them; in my own experience, which has not been very protracted, I have seen that young men who at first roused different hopes nevertheless, later, exactly fulfilled the kind expectations of mature age. Do this no longer, young men, for how else could a better generation ever begin? The bloom of youth will indeed fall from you, and the flame of imagination will cease to be nourished from itself; but feed this flame and brighten it through clear thought, make this way of thinking your own, and as an additional gift you will gain character, the fairest adornment of man. Through this clear thinking you will preserve the fountain of eternal youth; however your bodies grow old or your knees become feeble, your spirit will be reborn in freshness ever renewed, and your character will stand firm and unchangeable. Seize at once the opportunity here offered you; reflect clearly upon the theme presented for your deliberation; and the clarity which has dawned for you in one point will gradually spread over all others as well.

These addresses adjure you, old men! You are regarded as you have just heard, and you are told so to your faces; and for his own past the speaker frankly adds that—excluding the exceptions which, it must be admitted, not infrequently occur, and which are all the more admirable—the world is perfectly right with regard to the great majority among you. Go through the history of the last two or three decades; everything except yourselves agrees—and even you yourselves agree, each one in the specialty that does not immediately concern him—that (always excluding the exceptions, and regarding only the majority) the greatest uselessness and selfishness are found in advanced years in all branches, in science as well as in practical occupations. The whole world has witnessed that every one who desired the better and the more perfect still had to wage the bitterest battle with you in addition to the battle with his own uncertainty and with his other surroundings; that you were firmly resolved that nothing must thrive which you had not done and known in the same way; that you regarded every impulse of thought as an insult to your intelligence; and that you left no power unutilized to conquer in this battle against improvement—and in fact you generally did prevail. Thus you were the impeding power against all the improvements which kindly nature offered us from her ever—youthful womb until you were gathered to the dust which you were before, and until the succeeding generations, which were at war with you, had become like unto you and had adopted your attitude. Now, also, you need only conduct yourselves as you have previously acted in case of all propositions for amelioration; you need only again prefer to the general weal your empty honor in order that there may be nothing between heaven and earth that you have not already fathomed; then, through this last battle, you are relieved from all further battle; no improvement will accrue, but deterioration will follow in the footsteps of deterioration, and thus there will be much satisfaction in reserve for you.

No one will suppose that I despise and depreciate old age as old age. If only the source of primitive life and of its continuance is absorbed into life through freedom, then clarity—and strength with it—increases so long as life endures. Such a life is easier to live; the dross of earthly origin falls away more and ever more; it is ennobled to the life eternal and strives toward it. The experience of such an old age is irreconcilable with evil, and it only makes the means clearer and the skill more adroit victoriously to battle against wickedness. Deterioration through increasing age is simply the fault of our time, and it necessarily results in every place where society is much corrupted. It is not nature which corrupts us—she produces us in innocence; it is society. He who has once surrendered to the influence of society must naturally become ever worse and worse the longer he is exposed to this influence. It would be worth the trouble to investigate the history of other extremely corrupt generations in this regard, and to see whether—for example, under the rule of the Roman emperors—what was once bad did not continually become worse with increasing age.

First of all, therefore, these addresses adjure you, old men and experienced—you who form the exception! Confirm, strengthen, counsel in this matter the younger generation, which reverently looks up to you. And the rest of you also, who are average souls, they adjure! If you are not to help, at least do not interfere, this time; do not again—as always hitherto—put yourselves in the way with

your wisdom and with your thousand hesitations. This thing, like every rational thing in the world, is not complicated, but simple; and it also belongs among the thousand matters which you know not. If your wisdom could save, it would surely have saved us before; for it is you who have counseled us thus far. Now, like everything else, all this is forgiven you, and you should no longer be reproached with it. Only learn at last once to know yourselves, and be silent.

These addresses adjure you men of affairs! With few exceptions you have thus far been cordially hostile to abstract thought and to all learning which desired to be something for itself, even though you demeaned yourselves as if you merely haughtily despised all this. As far as you possibly could, you held from you the men who did such things as well as their propositions; the reproach of lunacy, or the advice that they be sent to the mad-house, was the thanks from you on which they might usually count. They, in their turn, did not venture to express themselves regarding you with the same frankness, since they were dependent upon you; but their innermost thought was this, that, with a few exceptions, you were shallow babblers and inflated braggarts, dilettante who have only passed through school, blind gropers and creepers in the old rut who had neither wish nor ability for aught else. Give them the lie through your deeds, and to this end grasp the opportunity now offered you; lay aside that contempt for profound thought and learning; let yourselves be advised and hear and learn what you do not know, or else your accusers win their case.

These addresses adjure you, thinkers, scholars, and authors who are still worthy of this name! In a certain sense that reproach of the men of affairs was not unjust. You often proceeded too unconcerned in the realm of abstract thought, without troubling yourselves about the actual world and without considering how the one might be connected with the other; you circumscribed your own world for yourselves, and let the real world lie to one side, disdained and despised. Every regulation and every formation of actual life must, it is true, proceed from the higher regulating concept, and progress in the customary rut is insufficient for it; this is an eternal truth, and, in God's name, it crushes with undisguised contempt every one who is so bold as to busy himself with affairs without knowing this. Yet between the concept and the introduction of it into any individual life there is a great gulf fixed. The filling of this gulf is the task both of the men of affairs—who, however, must already first have learned enough to understand you—and also of yourselves, who should not forget life on account of the world of thought. Here you both meet. Instead of regarding each other askance and depreciating each other across the gulf, endeavor rather to fill it, each on his own side, and thus seek to construct the road to union. At last, I beg you, realize that you both are as mutually necessary to each other as head and arm are indispensable the one to the other.

In other respects as well, these addresses adjure you, thinkers, scholars, and authors who are still worthy of this name! Your laments over the general shallowness, thoughtlessness, and superficiality, over self-conceit and inexhaustible babble, over the contempt for seriousness and profundity in all classes, may be true, even as they actually are. Yet what class is it, pray, that has educated all these classes, that has transformed everything pertaining to science into a jest for them, and that has trained them from their earliest youth in that self-conceit and that babble? Who is it, pray, who still continues to educate the generations that have outgrown the schools? The most obvious source of the torpor of the age is that it has read itself torpid in the writings which you have written. Why are you, nevertheless, so continually solicitous to amuse this idle people, despite the fact that you know that they have learned nothing and wish to learn nothing? Why do you call them "the Public," flatter them as your judge, stir them up against your rivals, and seek by every means to win this blind and confused mob over to your side? Finally, in your literary reviews and in your magazines, why do you yourselves furnish them with material and example for rash judgments by yourselves judging as unconnectedly, as carelessly, as recklessly, and, for the most part, as tastelessly as even the least of your readers could? If you do not all think thus, and if among you there are still some animated by better sentiments, why, then, do not these latter unite to put an end to the evil? As to those men of affairs, in particular they have passed through your schools—you say so yourselves. Why, then, did

you not at least make use of this transit of theirs to inspire in them some silent respect for learning, and especially to break betimes the self-conceit of the young aristocrat and to show him that birth and station are of no assistance in the realm of thought? If, perchance, even at that time you flattered him and exalted him unduly, now endure that for which you yourselves are responsible.

These addresses desire to excuse you on the supposition that you had not grasped the importance of your occupation; they adjure you that, from this hour, you make yourselves acquainted with this importance, and that you no longer ply your occupation as a mere trade. Learn to respect yourselves, and by your actions show that you do so, and the world will respect you. You will give the first proof of this through the amount of influence which you assume in regard to the resolution that is proposed, and through the manner in which you conduct yourselves regarding it.

These addresses adjure you, princes of Germany! Those who act toward you as though no man dared say aught to you, or had aught to say, are despicable flatterers, are base slanderers of you yourselves. Drive them far from you! The truth is that you were born exactly as ignorant as all the rest of us, and that, exactly like ourselves, you must hear and learn if you are to escape from this natural ignorance. Your share in bringing about the fate which has befallen you simultaneously with your peoples is here set forth in the mildest way and, as we believe, in the way which is alone right and just; and in case you wish to hear only flattery, and never the truth, you cannot complain regarding these addresses. Let all this be forgotten, even as all the rest of us also desire that our share in the guilt may be forgotten. Now begins a new life as well for yourselves as for all of us. May this voice penetrate to you through all the surroundings which normally make you inaccessible! With proud self-reliance it dares to say to you: You rule nations, faithful, plastic, and worthy of good fortune, such as princes of no time and of no nation have ruled. They have a feeling for freedom and are capable of it; but, because you so willed, they have followed you into sanguinary war against that which to them seemed freedom. Some among you have later willed otherwise, and, again because you so willed, they have followed you into that which to them must seem a war of annihilation against one of the last remnants of German independence. Since that time they have endured and have borne the oppressive burden of common woes; yet they do not cease to be faithful to you, to cling to you with inward devotion, and to love you as their divinely appointed guardians. Yet may you notice them, unobserved by them; set free from surroundings which do not invariably present to you the fairest aspect of humanity, may you be able to descend into the house of the citizen, into the peasant's cottage, and may you be able attentively to follow the still and hidden life of these classes, in which the fidelity and the probity which have become more rare in the higher classes seem to have sought refuge! Surely, oh, surely, you will resolve to reflect more seriously than ever how they may be helped! These addresses have proposed to you a means of assistance which they believe to be sure, thorough, and decisive. Let your councillors deliberate whether they also find it so or whether they know a better means, provided only that it be equally decisive. But the conviction that something must be done and must be done immediately, that this something must be radical and final, and that the time for half-measures and procrastination is past—this conviction these addresses would fain produce, if they could, in you personally, as they still cherish the utmost confidence in your integrity.

These addresses adjure you, Germans as a whole, whatever position you may take in society, that each one among you who can think, think first of all upon the theme that has been suggested, and that each one do for it exactly what in his own place lies nearest to him.

Your forefathers unite with these addresses and adjure you. Imagine that in my voice are mingled the voices of your ancestors from dim antiquity, who with their bodies opposed the on-rushing dominion of the world-power of Rome, who with their blood won the independence of the mountains, plains, and streams which, under your governance, have become the booty of the stranger. They call to you: Represent us; transmit to posterity our memory honorable and blameless as it came to you, and as you have boasted of it and of descent from us. Thus far our resistance has been held to be noble and great and wise; we seemed to be initiated into the secrets of the divine plan of the

universe. If our race terminates with you, our honor is turned to shame and our wisdom to folly. For if the German stock was some time to be merged into that of Rome, it was better that this had been into the old Rome than into a new. We faced the former and conquered it; before the latter you have been scattered like the dust. Now, however, since affairs are as they are, you are not to conquer them with physical weapons; only your spirit is to rise and stand upright over against them. To you has been vouchsafed the greater destiny of establishing generally the empire of the spirit and of reason, and of wholly annihilating rude physical power as that which dominates the world. If you shall do this, then are you worthy of descent from us.

In these voices also mingle the spirits of your later ancestors, of those who fell in the holy struggle for freedom of religion and of faith. Save our honor, likewise, they cry to you. It was not wholly clear to us for what we fought. Besides the legitimate resolve not to allow ourselves to be dominated in matters of conscience by a foreign power, we were also impelled by a higher spirit who never revealed himself entirely unto us. To you this spirit is revealed, if you have the power to look into the spirit world, and he gazes upon you with clear and lofty eyes. The motley and confused intermingling of sensuous and of spiritual impulses is wholly to be deposed from its world-dominion; and spirit alone, absolute, and stripped of all sensuous impulses, is to take the helm of human affairs. Our blood was shed that this spirit might have freedom to develop and to grow to an independent existence. Upon you it depends to give to this sacrifice its signification and its justification by installing this spirit into the world-dominion destined for him. If this is not the final goal toward which all the development of our nation has thus far aimed, our struggles, too, become a passing, empty farce, and the freedom of spirit and of conscience that we won is an empty word, if henceforth there is to be no longer any spirit or any conscience whatsoever.

Your descendants, still unborn, adjure you. You boast of your forefathers, they cry to you, and proudly you connect yourselves with a noble lineage. Take care that the chain may not be broken in you; so do that we also may boast of you, and that through you, as through a faultless link, we may connect ourselves with the same glorious lineage. Cause us not to be compelled to be ashamed of our descent from you as a descent that is low, barbarous, and slavish, so that we must conceal our ancestry or must feign an alien name and an alien lineage, lest we be immediately rejected or trodden under foot without further test. On the next generation that will proceed from you, will depend your fame in history: honorable, if this honorably witnesses for you; but ignominious, even beyond desert, if you have no offspring to speak for you, and if it is left to the victor to write your history. Never yet has a victor had sufficient inclination or sufficient knowledge rightly to judge the conquered. The more he abases them, the more justified does he appear. Who can know what mighty deeds, what magnificent institutions, and what noble customs of many a people of antiquity have been forgotten because their posterity was subjugated, and because, ungainsaid, the conqueror made his report upon them in accordance with his interests?

Even foreign lands adjure you so far as they still understand themselves in the very least, and still have an eye for their true advantage. Indeed, there are spirits among all peoples who still cannot believe that the great promises made to the human race of a reign of justice, of reason, and of truth can be a vain and an empty phantom, and who assume, therefore, that the present iron age is but a transit to a better state. They—and all modern humanity in them—count on you. A great part of this humanity is descended from us; the rest have received from us religion and culture. The former adjure us by the soil of our common fatherland, which is also their cradle, and which they have bequeathed free to us; the latter adjure us by the culture which they have acquired from us as a pledge of a higher happiness—they adjure us to maintain ourselves as we have ever been, for their sake; and not to suffer this member, which is of so much importance, to be torn from the continuity of the race that is newly budded, lest they may painfully miss us if they some time need our counsel, our example, our cooperation toward the true goal of earthly life.

All generations, all the wise and good who have ever breathed upon this earth, all their thoughts and aspirations for something higher mingle in these voices and surround you and lift to you imploring hands. Even Providence, if we may so say, and the divine plan of the universe in the creation of a human race—a plan which, indeed, exists only to be thought out by man and to be realized by man—adjures you to save its honor and its existence. Whether those are justified who have believed that mankind must always grow better, and that the conception of a certain order and dignity among them is no empty dream, but the prophecy and the pledge of an ultimate actuality, or whether those are to prevail who slumber on in their animal and vegetative life, and who mock every flight to higher worlds-upon these alternatives it is left to you to pass a final and decisive judgment. The ancient world with its magnificence and with its grandeur, and also with its faults, has sunk through its own unworthiness and through your fathers' prowess. If there is truth in what has been presented in these addresses, then, among all modern peoples, it is you in whom the germ of the perfecting of humanity most decidedly lies, and on whom progress in the development of this humanity is enjoined. If you perish as a nation, all the hope of the entire human race for rescue from the depths of its woe perishes together with you. Do not hope and console yourselves with the imaginary idea, counting on mere repetition of events that have already happened, that once more, after the fall of the old civilization, a new one, proceeding from a half-barbarous nation, will arise upon the ruins of the first. In antiquity such a nation, equipped with all the requisites for this destiny, was at hand, and was very well known to the nation of culture, and was described by them; had they been able to imagine their destruction, they themselves might have found in that half-barbarous nation the means of their restoration. To us, also, the entire surface of the earth is very well known, and all the peoples that live upon it. Do we, then, now know any such people, like to the aborigines of the New World, of whom similar expectations may be entertained? I believe that every one who has not merely a fanatical opinion and hope, but who thinks after profound investigation, will be compelled to answer this question in the negative. There is, therefore, no escape; if you sink, all humanity sinks with you, devoid of hope of restoration at any future time.

This it was, gentlemen, that at the close of these addresses I felt compelled to impress upon you as representatives of the nation and, through you, upon the nation as a whole.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEPH VON SCHELLING

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ON THE RELATION OF THE PLASTIC ARTS TO NATURE (1807)

A Speech on the Celebration of the 12th October, 1807, as the Name-Day of His Majesty the King of Bavaria Delivered before the Public Assembly of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Munich

TRANSLATED BY J. ELLIOT CABOT

Plastic Art, according to the most ancient expression, is silent Poetry. The inventor of this definition no doubt meant thereby that the former, like the latter, is to express spiritual thoughts—conceptions whose source is the soul; only not by speech, but, like silent Nature, by shape, by form, by corporeal, independent works.

Plastic Art, therefore, evidently stands as a uniting link between the soul and Nature, and can be apprehended only in the living centre of both. Indeed, since Plastic Art has its relation to the soul in common with every other art, and particularly with Poetry, that by which it is connected with Nature, and, like Nature, a productive force, remains as its sole peculiarity; so that to this alone can a theory relate which shall be satisfactory to the understanding, and helpful and profitable to Art itself.

We hope, therefore, in considering Plastic Art in relation to its true prototype and original source, Nature, to be able to contribute something new to its theory—to give some additional exactness or clearness to the conceptions of it; but, above all, to set forth the coherence of the whole structure of Art in the light of a higher necessity.

But has not Science always recognized this relation? Has not indeed every theory of modern times taken its departure from this very position, that Art should be the imitator of Nature? Such has indeed been the case. But what should this broad general proposition profit the artist, when the notion of Nature is of such various interpretation, and when there are almost as many differing views of it as there are various modes of life? Thus, to one, Nature is nothing more than the lifeless aggregate of an indeterminable crowd of objects, or the space in which, as in a vessel, he imagines things placed; to another, only the soil from which he draws his nourishment and support; to the inspired seeker alone, the holy, ever-creative original energy of the world, which generates and busily evolves all things out of itself.

The proposition would indeed have a high significance, if it taught Art to emulate this creative force; but the sense in which it was meant can scarcely be doubtful to one acquainted with the universal condition of Science at the time when it was first brought forward. Singular enough that the very persons who denied all life to Nature should set it up for imitation in Art! To them might be applied the words of a profound writer:[5] "Your lying philosophy has put Nature out of the way; and why do you call upon us to imitate her? Is it that you may renew the pleasure by perpetrating the same violence on the disciples of Nature?"

Nature was to them not merely a dumb, but an altogether lifeless image, in whose inmost being even no living word dwelt; a hollow scaffolding of forms, of which as hollow an image was to be transferred to the canvas, or hewn out of stone.

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[5] J.G. Hamann. *Hellenistische Briefe* I, 189.

This was the proper doctrine of those more ancient and savage nations, who, as they saw in Nature nothing divine, fetched idols out of her; whilst, to the susceptive Greeks, who everywhere felt the presence of a vitally efficient principle, genuine gods arose out of Nature.

But is, then, the disciple of Nature to copy everything in Nature without distinction?—and, of everything, every part? Only beautiful objects should be represented; and, even in these, only the Beautiful and Perfect.

Thus is the proposition further determined, but, at the same time, this asserted, that, in Nature, the perfect is mingled with the imperfect, the beautiful with the unbeautiful. Now, how should he who stands in no other relation to Nature than that of servile imitation, distinguish the one from the other? It is the way of imitators to appropriate the faults of their model sooner and easier than its excellences, since the former offer handles and tokens more easily grasped; and thus we see that imitators of Nature in this sense have imitated oftener, and even more affectionately, the ugly than the beautiful.

If we regard in things, not their principle, but the empty abstract form, neither will they say anything to our soul; our own heart, our own spirit we must put to it, that they answer us.

But what is the perfection of a thing? Nothing else than the creative life in it, its power to exist. Never, therefore, will he, who fancies that Nature is altogether dead, be successful in that profound process (analogous to the chemical) whence proceeds, purified as by fire, the pure gold of Beauty and Truth.

Nor was there any change in the main view of the relation of Art to Nature, even when the unsatisfactoriness of the principle began to be more generally felt; no change, even by the new views and new knowledge so nobly established by John Winckelmann. He indeed restored to the soul its full efficiency in Art, and raised it from its unworthy dependence into the realm of spiritual freedom. Powerfully moved by the beauty of form in the works of antiquity, he taught that the production of ideal Nature, of Nature elevated above the Actual, together with the expression of spiritual conceptions, is the highest aim of Art.

But if we examine in what sense this surpassing of the Actual by Art has been understood by the most, it turns out that, with this view also, the notion of Nature as mere product, of things as a lifeless result, still continued; and the idea of a living creative Nature was in no wise awakened by it. Thus these ideal forms also could be animated by no positive insight into their nature; and if the forms of the Actual were dead for the dead beholder, these were not less so. Were no independent production of the Actual possible, neither would there be of the Ideal. The object of the imitation was changed; the imitation remained. In the place of Nature were substituted the sublime works of Antiquity, whose outward forms the pupils busied themselves in imitating, but without the spirit that fills them. These forms, however, are as unapproachable, nay, more so, than the works of Nature, and leave us yet colder if we bring not to them the spiritual eye to penetrate through the veil and feel the stirring energy within.

On the other hand, artists, since that time, have indeed received a certain ideal impetus, and notions of a beauty superior to matter; but these notions were like fair words, to which the deeds do not correspond. While the previous method in Art produced bodies without soul, this view taught only the secret of the soul, but not that of the body. The theory had, as usual, passed with one hasty stride to the opposite extreme; but the vital mean it had not yet found.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.