CHAPTER – IV

KANT ON ORTHODOX RELIGION
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What is called the negative aspect of Kant's moral religion consists in his rejection of orthodoxy. Traditional religions are many in number. Many traditional religions are in vogue. We cannot expect that a philosopher should know each and every traditional religion. But Kant knew Christianity fairly well. Accordingly, the negative aspect of his moral religion consists in his rejection of three doctrines of Christianity. They are the doctrines of (1) the nature of the church, (2) the concept of original sin and (3) that of justification and grace.

The Nature of the Church

The spiritual authority of the church is Kant's prime target. According to him, the moral law conflicts with any ecclesiastical structures claiming to have divine authority.

Of course, Kant does not flatly expresses his view on the church. He is a moral philosopher and as such tries to find out the moral principles which rational men must observe in their practical life. And as we have discussed in the preceding chapter of this work, the ethical community, the kingdom of God is mandated in the third version of the categorical imperative. There can be only one such kingdom. The very fundamental character of this kingdom is its universality. As Kant thinks, such a kingdom
requires the observance of inner ethical duties. The members of that kingdom must be united in an inner ethical service of the heart.

Kant also holds that morality cannot be enforced in a juridical commonwealth, because though the state may require certain actions, it cannot require that these actions be done out of a moral motive. Though the advent of the civil state lifts man from the state of Nature, it does not raise him to an ethical state. If, however, human beings united in a civil society become motivated by the moral law while they obey the juridical laws of the society, they will see the laws of the society as morally right. Kant calls a community of human beings morally as well as juridically united an ethical commonwealth.

An ethical commonwealth, as Kant thinks, cannot be established in the same way as the state is. This is because each individual human being has moral power only over his own character. Nevertheless, for the full moral development of humanity humans must be united with other moral agents who are worthy of being treated as ends in themselves. The establishment of an ethical commonwealth is a hope of mankind. Kant examines this hope in his Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone. There he feels the need of divine assistance for its establishment. He has no doubt that he has got it in the foundation of Christianity. As a result, belief in God supports the triumph of good over moral indifferentism and evil in the course of history. The people of God united in the true church constitutes this instrument. This true church is sometimes described by him as the church invisible.
In this connection, Kant makes a distinction between the church visible and the church invisible. According to him, the church visible is not based on pure rational faith. It is based on ecclesiastical faith in historical documents and traditions. It can never be the ethical commonwealth which Kant speaks of. But the church invisible comprises those people who worship God by performing their moral duties in the hope that the realm of ends will be established in eternity. The church visible derives morality from theology. In the church visible theology is the ground; morality is grounded upon it. But the church invisible has no theological tenets except those implied by moral laws. It is the church invisible that represents the hope of moral religion for an ethical commonwealth. So consistently with this view Kant makes the following remark in his *Religion*:

... *In the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes which rest on history and which, through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirement of the good* ...

And further Kan adds in the same book that “we have good reason to say ... that the kingdom of God is come unto us once the principle of the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth, has become general and has gained some where a public foot-hold, even though the actual establishment of this state is still infinitely removed from us.”

Yet the invisible kingdom of God still needs to be organized.
as a visible community in order to function as a vehicle for promoting a pure moral faith. Herein lies the significance of Kant's teaching that though there is only one true religion there may be many ecclesiastical faiths, the latter being the visible historical form of the one universal church. But as part of the same ethical community, individual denominations still may appeal only to the moral reason of their members. As we have seen, specifically ethical duties cannot be mandated with penalties for their violation, whether by the state or by a church, without contradicting the very nature of those duties. Therefore, the relations between the members of a church must be similar to those in a republic or commonwealth, in which they all obey only laws to which they first have assented. Beyond that, reason alone cannot tell us exactly what juridical form a church must take.

Like any other community each visible denomination requires statutory laws regulating the administration and public business of the church. Of themselves, different sets of statutory laws are all equally good insofar as they promote or at least do not impede the moral interests of the members. Any differences between them are morally indifferent and not worth making.

The service of a visible church, Kant holds, is, therefore, twofold. The first and the most important service is the observance of universal ethical duties based on reason alone and aimed at virtue. Secondarily, the fulfillment of those duties are necessary to maintain the church as a visible community. The affairs of the church do require administrators, but they are properly only ministers in the literal sense, but not officials or dignitaries.
Because the most effective way in which the church can transmit pure religion may be through scripture, there also should be at least a small learned body of scholars or clerics to explain the moral meaning of the scriptures and the historical creeds of the church to its member, as well as to defend the church from its enemies.

Most individual churches, however, also have claimed a supernatural title to their members' obedience to statutory laws and observance of rituals, on the basis of a divine revelation containing special material duties to God. They, therefore, have insisted that their members fulfill special statutory duties in order to obtain salvation. Once this happens, Kant thinks, a church becomes a theocratic tyranny, relying on incentives of fear and hope based on superstition. Such a church is despotic in spirit, whether its actual structure is monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic. Contrary to all the ideals of the Enlightenment, the members of the church are then kept 'self-incurred tutelage'. By a clergy claiming that they alone have rightful authority over the interpretation of the scriptures and over even the very reason and thought of the laity. This hierarchy proclaims itself to be the uniquely authorized guardian and interpreter of the will of the invisible legislator.

Kant rejects political despotism because it does not respect the freedom and dignity of each person, rejects religious tyranny for exactly the same reason. "Religious truth does not require force for its support; it should rely on reasoned argument. Truth can defend itself .... Freedom of investigation is the best means to
consolidate the truth." By contrast, whether in the form of doctrinal dogmatism or political establishmentarianism or both, religious despotism demands a debasing and groveling subservience in order to perpetuate itself by enforcing unity without freedom.

In Kant’s view, if statutory religious authority is allowed to claim primacy over reason and the moral law, there is nothing to limit its sectarian demands. Kant notes that the principle seems to be that the more we believe, whether true or not, the safer is our salvation and the more pious is our belief.

Finally, because statutory religious obedience is coerced under the promise of eternal rewards and the threat of eternal punishment it is the worst kind of tyranny. By promoting heteronomy, it makes moral virtue and genuine religion impossible. It encourages either slavish subjection to sheer power or prudential – hypocritical and dishonest conformity. Such an abuse of sectarian power, if effective, crushes the very freedom necessary for moral autonomy and indeed for being religious. Consequently, Kant concludes that churches that resort to authoritarian bribes and threats become instruments of the antichrist by actually working against the ultimate moral end of the human race.

What is of the claim by a church that its authority is warranted by divine revelation? Clearly, God can, somehow enter human history of a particular time and place to found and organize his kingdom and to promulgate a pure moral code. If he has done so, those to whom he has revealed himself may somehow know
this. But we will still have no criteria that we can judge to be objectively sufficient to certify that any particular claim to revelation can be made known publicly and believed universally. Since no experience or intuition we can have, can ever be adequate to the concept of God our own reason forms, it is unclear how we could ever be sure that any revelation came from God, and we can not be morally obligated by uncertainties or even probabilities. We can only decide whether a claimed revelation contradicts the concept we already have of God or the moral demands of pure practical reason.

The orthodox response is that miracles are the ultimate validation of genuine revelation. But Kant's adoption of Newtonian physics meant that he held that the law of the universe must be exceptionless. If there could be exception, there would be no laws. In effect, Kant repeats Hume's earlier argument: Because miracles by definition violate the objective laws of natural causation, we obviously cannot understand how they might be possible. We have no rational way to know what causes anomalous events, much less that any such events actually are miraculously caused by God. Although we need not call in question any of these miracles and indeed may honor the trappings that help publicize the genuine moral doctrine in them. It is essential that we do not make it a tenet of religion that the knowing, believing, and professing of them are themselves means whereby we can render ourselves well-pleasing to God. No belief in a historical event can provide the warrant for or constitute a saving religious faith.
Moreover, there is no rational principle by which to distinguish between all the various and conflicting claims to a unique divine revelation or miracles on its behalf.

Differences in statutory religious beliefs are not grounds for hating or persecuting anyone; and beliefs, other than our own, should be tolerated, even if we think them mistaken. Such toleration should not be thought of as treason against God. As Kant holds, if there is no objective way to arbitrate between differences in sectarian beliefs, there is no such thing as treason against God.

Finally, because every historical revelation occurs at a particular place and time, it can not be known by, and believed by, everyone. Therefore, no historical faith can provide the foundation for a truly universal invisible kingdom of God. Kant does not deny that Christianity may be regarded as a revealed faith, with genuine moral teaching. But he holds that allegiance to the Christian church must rest on a pure rational faith, i.e., on the commitment of its members to the Christian church only insofar as it promotes the moral law. In the case of conflicts between the moral law and ecclesiastical statutory laws, the latter must always yield.

By contrast, the commands of the inner moral law, which is certain in and by itself, can be known and publicly shared by everyone throughout history, for that law is present in each and every person’s reason. It is certain that God speaks to everyone alike only through the moral law. Moreover, only through that law can we have certainty about what we must do that will be pleasing
to God. Therefore, only by obedience to that law can we be sure that we are offering God the true veneration which he desires.

In Kant's philosophy of religion, then, authentic religious faith is only that certainty which can be maintained by the moral will. Kant walks a thin line when he allows that this is a merely natural religion but expresses clearly that it is not religious naturalism. Naturalism, as he defines it, denies the reality of all supernatural divine revelation, whereas a pure rationalist is a person who recognizes at least the possibility of divine revelation. Nevertheless, for all the reason already given, religious rationalism – to which Kant apparently subscribes – does hold.

Kant believes that the claimed revelation of virtually every church will contain some moral doctrines that can be known by reason alone, and in this regard Christianity is the most adequate. Among all historical faiths, Christianity best embodies the essence of a pure, rational ethical religion, discoverable behind the symbolism of its various dogmas and rituals.

In Kant's interpretation, then, Jesus came to found the first true church, the first world religion in the fact of a dominant ecclesiastical faith based only on statutory laws. His essential message was the public promulgation of a pure rational faith, a moral religion consisting of the same moral law that all persons already find in their own hearts – mandating the pursuit of virtue through precepts of holiness and offering the hope of attaining what those precepts command.
Kant is also concerned with the so called biblical account of original sin. But what is meant by this sin? How critical is Kant about it? Does he stop merely by showing the falsity of original sin? In this chapter we attempt to answer these questions. But all this has been done here in reference to bringing out a new sense of the concept of original sin, in which Kant has used the epithet in his philosophy of religion very significantly.

In Christian theology original sin is a sin into which each human being is born. Its origin lies in Adam's disobedience to God when he ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His guilt was transmitted to his descendants. Though Genesis describes Adam's suffering as the consequence of his disobedience, it does not make Adam's sin hereditary. The main scriptural basis of the doctrine is found in the writings of St. Paul. St. Augustine (354 – 430 A.D.) helped make humanity's sinful nature a central element in orthodox Christian theology. Medieval theologians continued to explore the issue, and Thomas Aquinas (1224 – 1274 A.D.) offered a more optimistic view of human nature in his teaching on original sin than what had been done by Augustine. Martin Luther (1483 – 1546 A.D.) and John Calvin (1509 – 1564 A.D.) accepted a more Augustinian understanding, and modern evolutionary theory and biblical source criticism raised new challenges for the definition of original sin.

According to Lutherean theology, we all now enter the world
suffering from total moral depravity, unable by ourselves to do anything that will make us pleasing to God and restore the original relationship with Him. Personal immorality results in even further estrangement from God, a moral disaster that every person causes but that no human being can repair. Only God by His freely given grace and forgiveness, can restore the original lost relationship. Kant’s criticism brings it to the fore that this traditional doctrine of original sin simply cannot be true. The point may be explained in the following way.

First, the biblical account of original sin cannot be true because basing morality on the will of God, as Kant thinks, destroys morality insofar as wronging the infinite and inaccessible ruler of the world, i.e., a view of sin that is rationally incoherent anyway. Rather, sin is the choosing of one’s own inclinations over one’s duty, and the evil in doing so consists in violating one’s own free nature and dignity as a person.

Further, moral evil as Kant adds, cannot be attributed to a pre-existing and transmissible condition within human nature, such as a trait inherited from our first parents, independently of any choices which we ourselves have made. The consequences of natural causation may be naturally good or evil, but never morally good or evil. But a causal explanation of moral evil destroys the possibility of any free moral choice and, therefore, of any responsibility, and of moral character of any kind. Accordingly, Kant holds that we could not still be obligated to try to be pleasing to God, for we would be utterly unable to do so. Kant concludes his advocacy with the following statement –
Thus is the first beginning of all evil represented inconceivable by us (for whence came evil to that spirit?); but man is represented as having fallen into evil only through seduction, and hence as being not basically corrupt (even as regards his original predisposition to good) but rather as still capable of an improvement, in contrast to a seducing spirit, that is, a being for whom temptation of the flesh cannot be accounted as an alleviation of guilt. For man, therefore, who despite a corrupted heart yet possesses a good will, there remains hope of a return to the good from which he has strayed.

For Kant, the so called biblical account of original sin is not only morally unjustified, but also inconsistent with rationality. We must recall that one of the fundamental dictums of Kant’s philosophy is that reason avoids inconsistency. Kant attempts to avoid this inconsistency furthered by the biblical account by generating a new interpretation of it. And it is in this new interpretation that the story of Adam is an allegory of how each of us is born fundamentally good but is later tempted by sensuous inclinations. According to him, each of us has such temptation. This, as Kant expressly states, is the new interpretation in which we are all said to suffer from an inner propensity to evil, but while at the same time we also possess a propensity to good. Kant also contends that our tendency to social vices requires an equally species-wise solution. He holds that a political union can behaviourally discourage that tendency by prudential punishment. But for him this is not the genuine remedial measure. As he
opines, the only genuine remedy is a truly universal ethical society or what he calls a kingdom of virtue. An ethical community is by its very nature dedicated to the affirmation of the good principle.

This is why Kant insists on the importance of the church as a kingdom of God on earth, despite the manifold ways in which various forms of that church historically also had fallen into errors that impeded rather than promoted moral virtue. Again, echoing his commitment to the Enlightenment, Kant holds that moral philosophy has the crucial task of cleansing the church of specifically religious forms of heteronomy – authoritarianism, mysticism, superstition, and fanaticism.

No doubt, according to Kaht, we are evil doers. We yield to sensuous temptation. But this sensuous temptation is the surface cause of doing evil by us. Kant has excavated its deeper cause as well and this is the limitation of human reason. We have mentioned this limitation earlier.

According to Kant, human reason is a limited capacity. But this limitation consists not only in its incompetence in tackling with metaphysical questions, but also in determining our duties. Even we cannot observe all the duties without exception. Obviously, moral evil is a consequential episode of our limitation.

It is very interesting to note that in thus interpreting the Genesis account of original sin Kant is perfectly in agreement with Leibnitz. Leibnitz also holds that it is the limitation of human nature that makes us commit sin and act wrongly. In Leibnitz’s words,
No one can deny that every creature is essentially limited, for it is obvious that unless this is so no sin could occur. Its limitation accounts for its sin not as an unavoidable cause but merely as a necessary condition. If a free creature did not lack a certain degree of perfection it would not waver and yield to some temptation with which it is faced, and thus its freedom would never be wrongly employed.  

For both Leibnitz and Kant limitation is a necessary condition of immoral behaviour. Limitation accounts for the sinful nature of man. But none of them admits that sin is unavoidable. Man is endowed with reason as well. Man is not fallen. It is by virtue of his good will that man can usher in an era of truth, beauty and goodness.

**Grace and Justification**

The last but not the least point of Kant’s target of pointed criticism is the notion of grace and justification depicted in Pietism. We have given an introduction of Pietism in the second chapter of this work. And what we like to add is that according to Pietism we must rely on the mercy of God both for His forgiveness and for our moral conversion. Even justification also plays an important role in Pietism. It means the lost relation with God. So Pietism holds that man requires unmerited grace through faith in Jesus Christ and in his vicariously atoning sacrificial death for ourselves.
We have also dealt with Kant’s doctrine of morality. We have shown that he regards morality as autonomy. This conception of morality leads him to reject the traditional Pietistic doctrine of vicarious atonement and of salvation through faith. According to him, this Pietistic doctrine is antithesis of his thesis of morality. As he holds, no thoughtful person can believe that he needs only faith that someone else has vicariously atoned for his guilt for that guilt to be annihilated. Kant also holds that the Pietistic interpretation of vicarious atonement is rationally incoherent for no one can assume either the guilt for another’s evil disposition or the loss of happiness due to it. This is why he writes in the Religion, “This is no transmissible liability which can be made over to another like a financial indebtedness.”

Further, the doctrine of justification by faith leaves individuals a slothfully passive piety. Their freedom and the possibility of morality are completely taken away. This doctrine also encourages them to throw themselves on God’s mercy without doing what true justice requires. It does not improve their conduct, their way of life. So Kant says,

*To this end man busies himself with every conceivable formality, designed to indicate how greatly he respects the divine commands, in order that it may not be necessary to obey them.*

There is a common complaint against religion. The complaint is this that we contribute little to the improvement of our moral conduct. But according to him, passive respect for the law of God must be combined with virtue in order to be a genuinely religious disposition.
Kant argues that the only meaning that can be ascribed to justification is each person's radical moral self-redemption. If morally interpreted, the doctrine of atonement can only mean that one must strengthen one's resolve to stand on one's feet. But a saving faith involves two other elements. In Kant's words, those two elements are –

... the one having reference to what man himself cannot accomplish, namely, undoing lawfully (before a divine judge) actions which he has performed, the other to what he himself can and ought to do, that is, leading a new life conformable to his duty. The first is the faith in an atonement (reparation for his debt, redemption, reconciliation with God) : the second, the faith that we can become well-pleasing to God through a good course of life in the future. Both conditions constitute but one faith and necessarily belong together.  

In this connection, what Kant's theory of religion suggests is that we must act as if everything depends on us alone. In other words, there is only one way in which we may please God. This is by becoming better men. Good life alone makes us worthy of happiness. According to Kant, there exists no salvation for man apart from the sincerest adoption of genuinely moral principles into his disposition. He says,

*Whatever, over and above good life-conduct, man fancies that he can do to become well-pleasing to God is mere religious illusion and pseudo-survive of God.*
Kant also maintains that Christianity teaches that the change of ultimate principles that can be effected is so radical that even though it is the same person before and after, the first is described by Christianity as the old man, and the second as the new man. According to his own interpretation, it is the new man in us who is scripturally personified as the Son of God bearing the guilt of the old man. The new man as saviour accepts the punishment due to the old man for the latter’s moral wronging. In Kant’s interpretation the biblical reference to the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit symbolizes our hope of continuing steadfastly in a morally good disposition.

Accordingly, the biblical account of Christ’s life provides an extraordinarily powerful moral example. It is a symbol of manifestation of the good principle, i.e., humanity in its moral perfection. And His suffering and death are also symbolized. They stand for our overcoming and atoning for evil. The evil principle may not be conquered once and for all, but the life of Jesus shows how the good principle triumphs ultimately, though at the cost of great physical pain and the mortification of self-love.

Nothing further in the biblical account can be understood or have any moral value for us. The basis of taking the life of Jesus as an example of the good moral disposition is still our own morally legislative reason. And it generates both the ideal of holiness and the incentive to strive for it.

Nevertheless, we know fully well that we cannot make adequate reparation for our previous sinful actions. We can only
hope that they may somehow be wiped out by our moral conversion to a new mode of life. Such a hope is morally crucial. If the magnitude of past moral failings is great and if they still must count against achieving our final goal, it is all too easy to despair and give up any effort to strive for the goal. Moreover, the goal that the moral law apodeictically commands us to attain in order to be reconciled with God is holiness, and what that law commands always is and must be possible. Yet, as finite creatures, we never can be wholly adequate to that command. We can achieve virtue, but not holiness.

Kant is also concerned with the protection of human freedom. And it is in his attempt to protect human freedom and responsibility that he argues that faith in religious mysteries is a danger to admit any kind of superstition. But in the end he is driven to admit that we must cultivate religious trust - that if we do all that is in our power, God will help us realize our *summum bonum*, by somehow doing for us through grace whatever we cannot do for ourselves. So he holds that morality inevitably leads to religion and to the hope that religious faith can offer.

Anyway, according to Kant, we cannot avoid being conscious of our being unable to understand a crucial area of our moral life. Once again we find ourselves at the very limits of reason. We cannot understand how we are to reconcile freedom and responsibility with God's providing for our inadequacies. We cannot even claim to have any understanding because any relation of God to man are transcendent and incomprehensible. And this is why we should not try to do so. For us they must remain
completely incomprehensible mysteries. It is due to the limitation of human nature that people find it difficult to believe that steadfast diligence in morally good life-conduct is all that God requires of us, to be subjects in his Kingdom and well-pleasing to Him. No doubt, Kant is not unsympathetic with the heartfelt desire to people to try to gain further insight into their transcendent relation with God.

The heartfelt desire of people mentioned above has commonly led people to turn to fall into the stupidity of superstition and the madness of fanaticism. It is the persuasion that we can distinguish the effects of grace from those of Nature or can actually produce the former within ourselves. We cannot recognize a supersensible object in experience.

However, such a desire, according to Kant, commits some errors. One such error is the error of illuminationism. It is to believe every claim anyone makes to have access to some special arcane revelation from God. Another error is superstition. It constantly looks to experience for miracles. Still another error is the error of thaumaturgy. It falls into the religious illusion that devotional exercises can be a means of grace.

The illusion of being able to accomplish anything in the way of justifying ourselves before God through religious acts of worship is religious superstition, just as the illusion of wishing to accomplish this by striving for what is supposed to be communion with God is religious fanaticism. It is a superstitious illusion to wish to become well pleasing to God through actions which anyone can perform without even needing to be a good man. And it is called
superstitious because it selects merely natural means which in themselves can have absolutely no effect. But an illusion is called fanatical when the very means it contemplates, as supersensible, not within man's power, leaving out of account the inaccessibility of the supersensible and aimed at by the means.

Of course, Kant does not make any discrimination between these ecclesiastical devotions. According to him, they are all one and equal in value. That means, whatever they consist of – washing, praying, fasting, almsgiving, sacrifices, penances, pilgrimages, and even Tibetan prayer wheels – none of them are of any moral value. Either they are salutary insofar as they promote an authentic moral disposition or they are superfluous, worthless, and even pernicious.

Kant is concerned with clericalism also. He calls its service pseudo service. The veneration of mighty invisible beings, which was extorted form helpless man through natural fear rooted in the sense of his importance, did not begin with a religion but rather with a slavish worship of a god. When this worship had achieved a certain publicly legalized form it was a temple service, and it became a church worship only after the moral culture of men was gradually united with its laws. An historical faith constituted the basis of both of these, until man finally came to regard such a faith as merely provisional, and to see in it the symbolic presentation, and the means of promotion, of a pure religious faith. The intention of all of them is to manage to their own advantage the invisible power which presides over the destiny of men; they differ merely in their conceptions of how to undertake this feat. If they hold that
power to be an intelligent being and thus ascribe to Him a will from which they await their lot, their efforts can consist only in choosing the manner in which, as creatures subjected to His will, they can become pleasing to Him through what they do or retrain from doing.

The illusion here, Kant thinks, lies in thinking that one can become morally good through means such as rituals, which, of themselves, can produce no effect at all according either to natural laws or to moral laws of reason. This encourages the absurd belief that it is possible to become a good person without fulfilling the one certain condition for becoming a good person and so for pleasing God by obeying the moral law. The consequence of this illusion is a damnable insistence on what Kant terms pseudo-service, that is, the claim that salvation depends on such activities as accepting a denominational creed, obeying canon laws, and participating in the devotions of any particular form of the church. Kant, therefore, sarcastically comments,

_The more useless such self castigations are and the less they are designed for the general moral improvement of the men, the holier they seem to be; just because they are of no use whatsoever in the world and yet cost painful effort they seem to be directly solely to the attestation of devotion to God._

Anyway, we have mentioned at the outset of this chapter that Kant new Christianity fairly well. And thus far we have also explained the harsh criticism which he has raised against Christianity. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that he reduced
religion to morality or that he held religion to be merely an adjunct to the moral life. According to him, morality and religion have the same content; and the distinction between them is a formal one. Moral and religious consciousness of the ordinary men are basically correct and are worthy of respect. God's existence is the most profound fact, but a fact about which we can know nothing. Yet it is such a fact about which we may still have moral certitude based on the demands of the moral law that also grounds rationally necessary hope and faith. For short, morality is the ground of religion and religion is grounded upon it.

Kant's transcendental philosophy is grounded in faith and trust in God's plan for the human species. Despite human moral frailties and frequent moral failures, as long as we try to do all that we can, we may view our own eventual destiny and that of the human species optimistically. Only through such a religious faith embodied in our participation in the kingdom of God first here on earth and later after death does human ethical life take on its complete form as a social ideal, a moral community not unlike a family under a common moral Father.

Kant's philosophy of religion, therefore, represents his resolution of the enormously difficult challenge of fidelity both to the faith of the Enlightenment in the power of human reason and to the faith of the ordinary person in God and the importance of religion, particularly the Christian religion. There is essential moral truth in the Christian doctrines of the sanctity of the individual conscience, of Original Sin, and of justification by grace as well as by moral works. On the one hand, there is no need to regard
religion only as an impediment to rational progress, as so many Enlightenment thinkers held; and on the other hand, there is no need for truly religious people to see reason as a dangerous enemy of faith. No doubt, in his theory of religion Kant gives a moral defence of faith. So, consistently with Kant’s thesis Allen Wood comments that true originality and lasting value of Kant’s defence lie in showing that reason and faith require each other.

And further, Roger J. Sullivan’s comment is also interesting. As Sullivan says in this connection is that a price has to be paid by both the sides. On the one hand, reason mandates that every thing cannot be understood by science. On the other hand, the stultifying and heteronymous shackles used historically by both tyrannically governments and churches must be broken. In God’s plan we find that we can fulfill our vocation to be human only by standing on our own feet, by being conscious of our dignity as rational creatures. Only by doing so we will be entitled to hope that with the help of our creator, we can and will achieve our full final destiny, both as individuals and as a species.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibidem, p. 113


6. Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, op. cit., p. 39

7. Kant does it in his Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone. He interprets the Christian histodrama symbolically so that it would be consistent with his moral theory.


9. Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, op. cit., p. 66

10. Ibidem, p. 189


12. Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, op. cit., p. 158