

Kant

on History and Religion

*with a translation of Kant's 'On the failure
of all attempted philosophical theodicies'*

by Michel Despland



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The ultimate aim of this study is a reinterpretation of Kant's views on religion and especially of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. The interpretation I am offering is a fresh one, I believe, because Kant's writings on religion are brought into the wider context of Kantian thought, not by reference exclusively to his writings on ethics, but rather by reference to his writings on history. I hope to bring out the full meaning of Kant's philosophy of religion not primarily through the study of his views on morality and on the source of the moral law, but rather through the study of his views on the philosophy of history and on the problems of theodicy. His writings on history, being little known and often little understood, are necessarily an important part of this study.

An intrinsic contention of this study therefore is that the approach through his writings on history provides a better interpretative key to Kant's difficult writings on religion than the traditional approach which starts with the results of his philosophical ethics. This is the maximal form, so to speak, of my contention. The minimal form is that the interpretation of his philosophy of religion through his philosophy of history should be placed alongside the interpretation through the results of his ethics.

That the "traditional" approach to Kant's philosophy of religion is a well-established one is not to be doubted. It has a basis in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, where it is made clear that the limits set upon religious conviction and religious activity are those determined by morality. To conclude from this that Kant offered a strictly moral interpretation of religion and that the *Critique of Practical Reason* was the book that would shed light on his views of religion were easy steps, and many have taken them. One widely used paperback introduction to Kant treats Kant's views on religion at the end of a chapter on the possibility of moral experience and implies that

religion has no other significant content except the rational faith, or moral act of faith.² The only major work in English on Kant's philosophy of religion is probably responsible for this kind of statement. C. C. J. Webb stated in 1926 that "it is the distinctive feature of his philosophy of religion that it teaches us to seek in our moral consciousness and there alone the essence of religion."³ To go further back, a whole nineteenth century tradition, focused in Matthew Arnold's famous and catchy phrase "religion is morality touched with emotion,"⁴ identified the genuine concerns of religion with those of morality and always claimed, not without reason, Kant as their master in these matters.

These traditional views seem to me unnecessarily extreme and suspiciously lacking in nuances. (Remember Webb's "and there alone.") More importantly, I believe I can show that since 1926 Kantian studies have progressed in such a way as to make imperative a review and revision of such traditional views.

Numerous are the developments in Kantian studies since the publication of Webb's book that give us a solid basis for a reevaluation. One must first mention the ongoing publications of Kant's manuscripts, of the lectures on metaphysics, on history of religion, of the notes written during the preparation of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, and of numerous other reflections. This material, of course, is to be used very carefully: the lectures are edited for the most part on the basis of students' notes, and whatever was written while Kant prepared a book and did not find its way into the published work is perhaps to be considered as suspect (although this point should not be pushed too far). But even with these reservations it remains true that the material of Kant on religion is now quite vast, and is such as to show him defining problems in a wide range of issues, groping with difficulties, rather than expounding a doctrine. Thus there can be more breadth and more depth to contemporary studies of Kant on religion, which may go beyond the material published by Kant during his lifetime and which form the almost exclusive basis of Webb's study.

Furthermore, German scholarship focusing on Kant's theory of religion achieved some important results since that time. At the beginning of the century, with the studies of E. Troeltsch and A. Schweitzer, the view was firmly established that Kant's own piety and religious views were of the "enlightened" type, with a strong presence of the characteristic traits of deism. Troeltsch focused on the relationship established by Kant between religion and history and, after deciding

that Kantian talk of revelation and forgiveness is prudential, concluded that, while Kant inaugurated a philosophical interest for the investigation of the history of religion, he remained philosophically entirely with the deistic position according to which history serves only as an illustration.⁵ A. Schweitzer saw in Kant's philosophy of religion a tension between the results of critical idealism and those of practical philosophy, but in any case made religion instrumental to a rationally derived civilizational endeavour.⁶ In 1929 however, Schmalenbach, under the impact of Otto's book *The Idea of the Holy* (1923), inquired afresh into Kant's personal religiousness and his presentation and understanding of what religiousness is like.⁷ Schmalenbach, who did not really examine Kant's elaborated theology or his philosophy of religion, concluded after an imposing gathering of evidence that Kant's awe before infinity, his respect for the moral law, and his religious sense of the *deus absconditus* are both deep and central and are a well-developed and well-characterized sense of the holy which sees the holy primarily as righteous. On this point (and on others) Schmalenbach's *Kant's Religion* also documented the kinship of Kant's piety with that of the Old Testament and of Calvinism. Bohatec called the study revolutionary: it established that Kant's personal religiousness is not rooted in the Enlightenment.⁸ Nothing has since come to refute the main body of Schmalenbach's conclusions.

German investigations have also revised the dossier on Kant and Protestantism. In 1899 Friedrich Paulsen's *Kant, der Philosoph des Protestantismus* defined an ideological conflict between the Catholic principle and the Protestant principle, between Aquinas and Kant. Kant is identified with Protestantism, or rather perhaps *Kultur-protestantismus* is identified with Kant, his principle of autonomy of reason and conscience, and his objection to dogmatism. In 1917 in a writing with the same title, Julius Kaftan summarized the results of the whole Ritschlean school: Kant's is the Protestant philosophy on account of the self-critical limits he placed upon our knowledge, and on account of the primacy of the ethical (and, within that, of duty over eudaemonism). The culture of Protestantism is said to have found its philosophical expression in Kant. Further minor articles draw parallels between Kant and Luther, occasionally somewhat laboriously. Since those days however, Werner Schultz's study *Kant, als Philosoph des Protestantismus* (1960) has dealt with these oversimplifications. One might quarrel with Schultz's Troeltsch-like understanding of the problem of the "essence of" something, and with his presentation of

the essence of Protestantism as a dialectical neo-orthodoxy, but Schultz's book must be accepted as a remarkably balanced account of the similarities and differences between Kant and classical Protestantism on such matters as faith, freedom, law, love, and grace. Schultz proposed giving up labelling Kant the philosopher of Protestantism.

To this we must add Bohatec's definitive investigation of the sources of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, a study published in 1938. The book also contains an esteemable interpretation of the main themes of Kant's only book specifically devoted to the philosophy of religion. And, finally, one should not neglect the revival of metaphysical interest in Kant, heralded by Max Wundt's *Kant als Metaphysiker* (1924), a development which gave us Heimsoeth, Heidegger, M. Krüger, and G. Martin.⁹

Besides these developments in Kantian studies there have also been developments in the questions philosophers ask about religion. Kant stated that man learns from nature not like the pupil from the teacher, but like the judge from the witness. The inquirer formulates the questions.¹⁰ The history in this century of the *Forschung* in Kant's philosophy of religion shows that the same happens with inquiries into the thought of major thinkers. Developments in philosophy of religion since the twenties led interpreters to ask different questions of Kant and new nuances of meaning appeared in the master's answers. I have already referred to the impact of Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy*. The confluence of the streams of Christian theology, philosophy of religion, and history of religions is producing different perspectives with which to approach the Kantian corpus on religion. Likewise, developments in the debate on "morality and beyond" and the whole field of theology of culture (consider the impact of Tillich's work, for instance) prepare us to ask fresh questions about the whole issue of the relationship between morality and religion in Kant. On these grounds too the time has come for a reopening of the dossier on Kant and religion.

The reader may grant that a fresh look at Kant's philosophy of religion is needed, but why, he may ask, should this be done in the light of his philosophy of history?

I believe a *prima facie* case for this kind of a fresh approach can be made by referring to elements internal to the Kantian corpus. The

case rests first of all—but not mainly—on a negative point: Kant's ethical philosophy presents many problems, both in interpretation and, more importantly, in evaluation. Convergent criticisms charge it with formalism, legalism, and a less than adequate attention to the emotional dynamisms of man's ethical life. As we shall see, many of these criticisms are unfounded, but there remains nevertheless a suspicion that the kind of ethical outlook Kant had did not predispose him to the best and fairest awareness of the real dynamics of man's religious life. Thus the question is raised whether Kant's ethics does provide the most satisfactory starting point for any interpretation of religion. And indirectly the question is also raised as to whether his ethical philosophy is the only context in which Kant developed his interpretation of religion and the only part of his philosophical authorship that can function as the gate to an understanding of his philosophy of religion.

The case for attempting to see Kant's writings on history and on religion in a single glance rests also on positive considerations. During the eighteenth century a very close connection existed between philosophy of history and the labours of theologians.¹¹ Theologians dealt with history constantly and the first philosophers of history were passionately involved with religious issues. First of all theologians gave the initial impetus for the development of techniques of historical criticism, and believers and unbelievers soon crossed swords over the principles of historical criticism and over the interpretation of documents. This need not concern us here, for when Kant thought about history he was not especially interested in the methods and skills of the professional historian. As Weyand pointed out, for instance, he made no clear distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie*.¹² (Later German historians, not to mention philosophers and theologians, would be left quite speechless if they did not have that distinction to dwell upon!) Secondly and more importantly, the grand philosophy of history created by Augustine (or Lactantius?) long remained the peculiar province of theologians: the interpretation of the overall course of human history, the statement of its purpose, and the timid beginnings of reflection on the significance of man's historical predicament were developed by theologians with religious and occasionally apologetic concerns in mind. Think of Bossuet, for instance, whose statement towers in lonely grandeur and was constantly restated or used as a foil. The eighteenth century anti-theologians gladly accepted to join battle with the believers on this chosen field of philosophy of

history. Voltaire, for instance, deemed it essential to develop a non-Christian philosophy of history, or a philosophy of history that would refute the claims of orthodox Christianity. The names of Vico, Bayle, Montesquieu, Leibniz, Lessing, Herder, Hume, and Gibbon all confirm the intimate connection between the first modern philosophies of history and theological debates. Both sides of the argument joined in the belief that the true philosophy of history would firmly establish faith in Providence or definitively discredit the Christian faith. This very agreement among the most bitter adversaries makes it clear that in the eighteenth century the philosophy of history was a burning religious question. The solid hold upon minds gained by the philosophy of progress during the second half of the century indicates the depth and the scope of the intellectual energies devoted to the question. There can be no doubt then that in this century philosophical problems in interpretation of history and theological problems were closely connected and examined together. This connection was at least as close as, if not closer than, the connections seen between morality and religion. Unbelievers were at least as fond of saying that religion stifled progress as of saying that it discouraged virtue.

The desirability—and the feasibility—of a study devoted to Kant's views on both history and religion is ultimately based on a look at the content of Kant's writings in these two areas.¹³ Often the two kinds of writings come to deal with the same problems.

On at least four points Kant's writings on history deal with problems which have been traditionally theological problems, since they naturally arise out of key tenets of Christian theism. These four points are: How did evil arise in the world? (see *Conjectural Beginnings of Human History*); Why does God tolerate moral evil and especially the sufferings of the innocent? (see *On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies*); How will history end? (see *The End of All Things*); and Can evil be overcome, or is there moral progress? (see *Perpetual Peace* and the second part of *The Strife of Faculties*). Each one of these questions reappears in one form or another in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.¹⁴

It is apparent therefore that Kant's writings on history as they examine the idea of a development of the human race express many theological concerns and often overlap in their content with his writings on religion. Most of them attempt to give some kind of justification of the purposes of the will or agency that lies behind the course of all things and the destinies of men. The problem of theodicy

therefore lies at the heart of his attempts at constructing a philosophy of history. Reflections on the nature of moral purposefulness, on the scope of evil in the world, and on the possible empirical evidences of moral purposefulness in history are found also in his writings on religion. This common concern of both sets of writings makes it very difficult to decide for instance whether the essay *On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies* should be classified with his writings on history or with his writings on religion. (Incidentally this essay is so important for this study that I include my translation of it in an appendix. In it Kant profoundly renewed the worn out problem of theodicy, and I trust that the availability of its translation will provide clear evidence for the intellectual forcefulness which Kant brought to problems in philosophy of history and of religion and of the connection which he saw between the two disciplines.)

That Kant approached philosophy of history with religious concerns and especially with the problems of theodicy in mind, is made clear by his use of a peculiar concept of Nature, a use found only in his writings on history.¹⁵ Nature there is not used in the pastoral-poetic sense (country with arresting vistas or scenes of animal life with moral lessons), and not in the scientific, critical sense of Newtonian nature (the system of causal relations empirically known). We hear there of a Nature which is Providence, the mother of mankind, the mainspring of progress, and the guarantee of order. (I shall always capitalize the word when used with that meaning.)¹⁶ Succinctly, we hear of the Nature of the classical metaphysicians. That Kant should use there such a weighty metaphysical concept—and use at first sight rather uncritically—is enough to give considerable philosophical importance to his writings on history. More importantly for my argument now, it establishes a further connection between Kant's views on history and his religious faith that the universe is, ultimately, firmly in wise moral hands. As I hope to show, the use of this concept is also closely related to his conception of a moral faith and his own personal expressions of a philosophic faith in reason.

Finally I may add that Kant's philosophy of history is also concerned with the nature of the Kingdom of God and the significance of the teaching of Jesus. I feel justified, therefore, in concluding that the contents themselves of Kant's writings on history and on religion confirm the suitability of a common study examining both in the light of each other.

But to claim to find a key to Kant's philosophy of religion in his writings on history entails two sizeable problems. The philosophy of history has been a neglected part of Kantian scholarship (although there are signs that a different trend is coming).¹⁷ And this claim of ours means that we will find our meat in Kant's shorter or minor writings, which many tend to consider as being far away on the periphery of Kantian philosophical authorship and as having little relation to the three Critiques,¹⁸ the masterpieces of the critical philosopher (unless one altogether refuses to give them genuine philosophical significance, on grounds of their not being "critical"). On these two points some kind of defense of my position seems to be necessary.

How can one account for the fact that the philosophy of history has not yet imposed itself as a significant or important part of the Kantian whole? Körner and Copleston for instance do not devote a single paragraph to it. As Fackenheim put it: "Many expositors treat Kant's philosophy of history; but few treat it seriously. Many treat it, for it is popular and attractive; few treat it seriously, for it seems unconnected, and indeed incompatible with the main body of his thought."¹⁹ It was once commonly accepted that the eighteenth century was shallow in historical matters²⁰ and this may have something to do with the little amount of serious interest Kant's philosophy of history received at the hands of Kantian scholarship. And its lack of immediately apparent connection with the monumental Critiques must also have been a factor. The major revivals of Kantian scholarship and thought in the nineteenth century were all led by thinkers who, not particularly concerned about history, were in reaction against post-Kantian "speculation" (and philosophy of history was a large part of Hegelian "speculation"), and found their lodestar in either one of the first two Critiques. (I am thinking mainly of the Heidelberg and Marburg schools respectively.) Dilthey, Troeltsch, Medicus, and Delbos were exceptions in that respect.²¹ But, however important these authors were, they have hardly been the dominating influences in Kantian scholarship, particularly in that of the English-speaking world. And when their impact was felt it was more in schools of theology than among the philosophers. Vorländer devoted himself to Kant's shorter writings and went so far as to call the philosophy of history "Kant's favourite topic."²² (With Weyand I believe this is going a bit too far.) Vorländer's influence however was again limited.

Finally Kant's writings on history have suffered from suspicions arising out of their literary quality. His writings on history have an

obvious quality of persuasiveness. They transparently express a rare quality of intellectual concern. (On these two counts only a few pages of the major Critiques can compete with them. Think, for instance, of the prefaces to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and of the opening pages of the section on the transcendental doctrine of method in that same Critique.)²³ Their brilliance, however, may appear to be boldness, and their eloquence may seem to imply lack of philosophic care.

This very literary quality brings us to the second problem. Just how important are Kant's shorter writings in comparison with the three Critiques, these major philosophical achievements? Can one take seriously Kant's thoughts expressed in short occasional essays meant for a wide reading public? Kant's shorter writings on history may have the same force and originality as the Critiques (and I believe they do), but they certainly do not have the same technical thoroughness. To this one should reply that the quick yet well-written essay may be—and often is—more readily expressive of a thinker's deep intellectual concerns than the vast monuments using all the technical philosophical machinery prevalent in the schools of that day. It just may be that we will have to turn to the "minor writings" to find an inkling of the profound intellectual commitments that led Kant to the fastidious and complex work of the Critiques. At any rate to dismiss them as philosophically insignificant strikes me as an insult to their writer.²⁴

For those who doubt that the writings on history bear any relation to the standpoint of the Critiques, I shall point out the following facts. Although Kant's pen was quick when it came to letters and essays, the gestation of the Critiques was slow, laborious, and came late in his life. It took him twelve years to write the *Critique of Pure Reason* and he was 57 when he published it. The *Critique of Judgement* was more quickly written (and shows it, for it does not exhibit the same care and thoroughness in analysis, and limits itself to two kinds of judgments: the aesthetic and the natural teleological one, with a brief treatment of the moral teleological one), but it appeared in 1790 when Kant was 66. The picture of a Kant growing old, feeling the need to express himself quickly on subjects dear to his heart and mind, resorting to the style of the essay and taking a short cut from the professional drudgery of writing a philosophical monument, is credible indeed.²⁵

The earliest of Kant's important writings on history *The Idea* appeared in 1784 (he was then 60) and the last appeared in 1798 in *The Strife of Faculties* and is thus found among the very last texts he prepared for the publisher. When Kant wrote his shorter writings on

history he was in full possession of his mature critical standpoint. His works in this field are not essays of his youth, nor of his long pre-critical middle age. And if they are the work of an older man who feels the onrush of age, they are not yet works of senility. The very chronological simultaneity between the writings on history and the publication of the three Critiques forces one to look seriously for a relationship between them.

Moreover, I cannot imagine in Kant's mind a dichotomy between salon polite conversation and philosophical endeavour, the kind of dichotomy, for instance, that some writings of Hume seem to suggest. Kant saw his philosophy of history as working out the problem of a "moral teleology,"²⁶ namely a teleological process that strives toward the highest good and strives in conformity with the laws of freedom. This puts it right in conjunction with the *Critique of Judgement* and its analysis of the possibility of teleological judgements and with the *Critique of Practical Reason* and its statement of the moral ends men must set before themselves. The force of Fackenheim's statement becomes inevitable: we are obliged to take Kant's philosophy of history seriously, that is, "to treat it as a systematic whole, and a systematic part of a larger systematic whole—the Kantian system."²⁷

To accept this view is not to contend that Kant's philosophy of history is a piece of work that is as carefully constructed and as thoroughly worked out as the critical philosophy found in the three Critiques. No serious interpreter will dream of asserting that Kant created a philosophy of history as he created criticism. Kant from time to time simply took up various problems in philosophy of history, all problems which were discussed by his contemporaries, and treated them in the form of essays. What I do contend is that these various essays add up to the outline of a philosophy of history, namely, that they are a consistent whole, and that each piece and their sum exhibit the Kantian philosophical genius at work, and thereby produce a specifically Kantian approach to problems of philosophy of history.

Kant's philosophy of history therefore must and may be squared with the results of the critical philosophy, although this is a task Kant did not pursue himself in detail. The compatibility of the two will be shown later. All we need now is to trust that Kant was intelligent enough to be consistent with himself. As a working hypothesis therefore, I am prepared to take over L. W. Beck's judgement that: "Kant's mature interpretation of history is his application of the principal theses of his critical philosophy to (the) widespread beliefs of his

time. None of them he originated. Most of them he accepted when young and modified when old, all of them he illuminated.²⁸

I therefore feel no qualms in taking Kant's philosophy of history as philosophically important and as a part of a coherent Kantian whole, even though it came to expression only in "minor writings," nor in turning to it to provide the content for the interpretation of Kant's philosophy of religion, and especially of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

In fact, a demonstration of the philosophical significance of the writings on history may be necessary to help the reader see the writings on religion (as a corpus distinct from the philosophical discussion of the theistic proofs) as a significant part of the Kantian whole. To accept Kant's shorter writings as philosophically substantial pieces is a necessary pre-condition of any serious study devoted to Kant's writings on religion. Because, after all, Kant's writings on religion are "minor writings" too. *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* is not a fourth Critique, and literarily belongs to the shorter writings, although it is the longest, most elaborate, and obviously most thought out of them.²⁹ (That Kant's writings on religion and those on history belong both to the same literary category, and were composed during the same period, are further indications of the suitability of a common study devoted to both.)

Furthermore, the very fact that Kant's shorter writings on history do amount to a philosophy of history strengthens the credibility of the view which holds that his writings on religion also amount to a philosophy of religion even though they were never embodied in a "major" work with Critique in its title, and even though they are not immediately and apparently connected to the systematic whole formed by the three Critiques.³⁰

That we find in Kant a philosophy of religion is not universally granted, far from it. Many have turned to Kant's writings on religion out of curiosity for the "religious opinions" of such a great man. A few quotations from *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* are placed next to testimonies from his friends regarding his practice of church attendance and the question is left at that. In a slightly more sophisticated way, some have turned to Kant's positive utterances on God and to his writings on religion to find out what is left after one has denied the possibility of proofs of the existence of God.

But this is not the kind of interest that I bring to my study nor the kind of study that I propose to offer. My study of Kant "on religion" entails the claim that I find in Kant not just religious views (who does not have those?), not just some conclusions on God (most philosophers have that), but also a thought-out philosophy of religion that can be of use today to anyone concerned with a responsible philosophical and systematic treatment of the problems raised by the notion of "religion." I voiced my dissatisfaction with a tradition of interpretation which, having found a system in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, proceeds to find nothing in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* except a confirmation of the theses of that system, thereby flattening out, so to speak, and treating as a mere appendage, two hundred pages of Kantian effort. Rather I shall contend that there exists in Kant the elements of a self-subsisting philosophy of religion, part of a larger systematic whole to be sure, but nevertheless a coherent intellectual effort, pursued in its own right, following methods of its own, and dealing with problems of its own. I believe that Kant's writings on religion will more readily appear in this light if placed alongside a serious consideration of his writings on history and thereby removed somewhat from the overwhelming intellectual domination of the three Critiques.

Furthermore, I shall contend that there exists in Kant's writings on religion not only a coherent body of thought, but an important transition in the history of Western philosophical efforts regarding religious issues. Until Kant's time, religious philosophy meant primarily metaphysics, first philosophy, or ontology. The concept of God is the major and often the only locus of such a discipline. It is readily granted that Kant effected a shift from "philosophical theism" to "moral theism" and his treatment of the proofs of the existence of God is evidence enough of that. I believe, however, that Kant's writings on religion are important for a further reason. In them Kant effected a transition from a tradition of religious philosophy preoccupied with the doctrine of our knowledge of God to a modern outlook that offers also and perhaps primarily a philosophical interpretation of the nature of religion, of man's religiousness, and of man's religious symbols and institutions. In other words, Kant appears as one of the founders of philosophy of religion in the modern sense of the word. To put it briefly, the philosophical problem of God is religionized and is placed in the broader context of a philosophical consideration of man's religious nature and of man's historical religious

communities. A full treatment of Kant on religion must let this philosophy of religion appear beside – or in relationship with – his moral theism. This is one more reason for placing Kant's writings on religion in the context of his philosophy of history. For in Kant's writings on history we find his examination of what man has revealed about himself and his communities throughout his history.

The focusing of attention on Kant's shorter writings on religion does not entail permanently setting aside the philosophical achievements of the three Critiques. The relationship between the critical philosophy as found in the three Critiques on the one hand and the philosophy of religion on the other, will be constantly assumed and clearly shown when relevant, just as I said that the results of the philosophy of history can be squared with those of the critical philosophy. I will thus not fail to illumine Kant's views on religion by reference to the conclusions of the three Critiques.

Thus for the purpose of the interpretation of Kant's philosophy of religion (which is after all my ultimate goal), I do not question at all the relevance and crucial importance of the three Critiques, but I question the value of the tradition that begins and ends with the Critiques (and commonly only with the first two) to interpret Kant's views on religion (how often has Kant's philosophy of religion been summarized by saying that there cannot be any theoretical proof of the existence of God, but there can be a moral one, and that the religious man accepted the imperatives of the moral law as coming from God himself and does not need to go to church?). The quarrel is really with a question of order. It may be that Kant's philosophy of religion has been a neglected part of Kantian scholarship because it has not yet yielded all its meaning on account of the established custom of interpreting it in the light of a few *loci classici* of the critical philosophy. At any rate, by placing it first in the context of the shorter writings on history, the one to which it naturally belongs, I hope to be able to show its full meaning and to present all its implications with greater accuracy and greater depth. I do not believe that the statement will emerge that Kant's philosophy of religion is not at all a moral one. But I do hope to circumscribe more exactly and with greater nuances the sense in which it can be said that Kant offered a moral interpretation of religion.

One last point needs to be made. It takes us beyond Beck's judgement quoted earlier. I shall also suggest that a new avenue for the understanding of the three Critiques can perhaps be found if the

Critiques are set in the context of the writings on history and religion. The critical philosophy was not for Kant a *philosophia perennis* but a historical event. Kant presented it as a new stage growing out of the previous ones. Kant's very concept of criticism is ultimately related to his philosophy of history and to his kind of belief in God, and the critical philosophy can be inscribed within the framework provided by his philosophy of history and that of religion. To show that, however, would be a huge task far beyond the already not too modest scope of this study.

It will have to remain my general contention therefore that there is an organic relationship between the philosophy of history and religion on the one hand and the critical philosophy on the other. Although vastly differing in style, each of the two sets of writings is conditioned by the other and each must be illumined by the other. In the discussion of Kant's philosophy of history and of his philosophy of religion I will include chapters drawing upon the three Critiques to illumine the philosophical issues encountered in his doctrine of history and of religion. What reassessment, if any, of his entire philosophy may follow from the results of this investigation into his philosophy of history and his philosophy of religion remains to be seen. Whatever is the worth of my suggestions in this area, to contribute to a better grasp of a part of Kant's philosophy would be reward enough for me: