

Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason," notwithstanding the loftiness of its ethical standards and the stimulus which a study of the work always affords, shows the critical thinker in his least illuminated aspect. It discloses the historically conditioned Kant. Brought up in a pietistic environment, Kant was never able wholly to free himself from the theological influences to which he had been subjected in his youth; and a very unenlightened theology it was, which has unwisely emphasized one aspect of the dualism latent in the Christian system. Thus it is historically intelligible, and only so, that he could declare the practical interests of humanity to require belief in certain transcendent ideas which he had previously shown to be empty schemata of a merely possible knowledge and that he could write the following desperate sentence: "If the world is without a beginning and therefore without an end, if there is no *Urwesen* distinct from the world; if the will is not free, and if the soul is perishable [he had previously proved that there was no ground for the traditional belief in the existence of a soul substance], then moral ideals and principles lose all their validity and fall along with the transcendental ideas which were their theoretical buttresses." It is quite absurd to maintain that there is a necessary connexion between morality and a Semitic dogma of creation: it is false that morality or religion depends on the dogma that mental phenomena are exempt from natural law: it is false that there is any radical opposition between experimental science and morality, happily too for the latter, since the former is winning fresh adherents every day and is what every one is coming more and more, and with every reason, to believe in. Hence there can be nothing more pernicious to human life and more fatal to ethics, than to bring morality into conflict with the best grounded convictions of men. Nevertheless, in apparent sympathy with Kant's unfortunate inheritance, some philosophers still attempt to disparage the sciences; I say "apparent," because the motive does not issue from a spirit of genuine criticism, like Kant's, which aimed at determining the extent of knowledge, but from a spirit of