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Can Kant's Ethics Involve the Idea of Divine Grace?

Airi NAKANO

Abstract

This article focuses on the concept of divine grace in Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (1793/4). Although it seems too theological for philosophical arguments, it plays an important role in Kant's ethics. I shall seek to establish the following claims. Firstly, I shall dismiss an interpretation according to which the concept of divine grace conflicts with the system of Kant's ethics. Secondly, I shall suggest that the concept of divine grace is inevitably assumed when one accepts the following two presuppositions that are derived from the structure of human reason: a) that the highest good is a duty of reason; b) that anyone faces serious and systematic difficulties with regard to its accomplishment. Analyzing the difficulties and examining the previous interpretations, I shall indicate the necessity of the concept of divine grace as an object of hope. Finally, I shall enumerate its minimum essential features.

The findings suggest that assuming the concept of divine grace is needed if one wills to accomplish the highest good rationally. Hence, it should be emphasized that the concept of divine grace is not limited to theology. Rather, it plays a philosophically crucial role in Kant's ethics.

1. Introduction

Immanuel Kant's religious theory in *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (I will call it '*Religion*' below) has for too long been almost completely sidelined in philosophical arguments. According to Palmquist, 'Kant's actual arguments [of *Religion*] were largely ignored in the English - speaking world until' the 1970s.¹ However, they had been considered in view of Kant's personal convictions in religious matters, in particular with regard to the question as to whether these complied with Christian doctrines or not.² According to Michalson, interpreters of *Religion* have argued over whether Kant is an atheist or a defender of Christianity,³ while most of researchers of Kant's critical philosophy have taken him as a non-religious person. However, the very reason that commentators have hardly taken notice of Kant's religious theory in his critical philosophy and ethics is not only that Kant was taken to be a non-religious person but also that a crucial conflict was perceived between his religious theory of divine grace and his ethics.⁴ Wolterstorff

¹ Palmquist 2016, xiii. While Bohatec (1938) is a detailed commentary written in German in the 1930s, most of the commentaries in English have been published in the 2010s: DiCenso (2012), Pasternack (2014), Palmquist (2016) etc. According to Palmquist (2016, xiii), there are several major turning points in English-speaking scholarship on Kant's religious theory. The first occurred in the 1920s, the second occurred in the 1970s, and the third occurred in the 1990s, initiating a new phase to which the above commentaries belong. In my paper, I draw on the interpreters of the third phase. While I will not deal with the first and second of the studies, the 'Editor's introduction' in Firestone & Palmquist (2006) provides an account of the whole history of the study about Kant's religious theory in Anglophone countries.

² Firestone and Palmquist 2006, 1.

³ Michalson 1999, 4.

⁴ Although in this paper I shall not touch this criticism, there is also a highly influential study by John E. Hare that criticizes one of the core experiments in *Religion*, in which Kant aims at translating the terms of Christian orthodoxy into the terms of his pure religious theory, as a failure. (Hare 1996, 60)

pointed out the conflict about divine grace in 1991, and since then, as Firestone and Jacobs confessed, it has remained a crucial charge against the consistency of *Religion*.⁵

Let us look at interpretations about the conflict in more detail. It was said that the conflict had two aspects, namely with regard to Christian orthodoxy and corresponding to justifying grace and sanctifying grace. Justifying grace means divine forgiveness of our past sins; sanctifying grace means divine aid with regard to obtaining a human moral disposition. Firstly, it was thought that Kant's theory of justifying grace undermined the core of his ethical system. For, if justifying grace atoned our sins wholly, the moral actions that each person had in the past performed spontaneously would become completely meaningless; however hard one beats one's reluctant inclinations and performs good deeds—this is the central idea of Kant's ethics—, justifying grace would make not only his past sin undone, but also turn these future efforts into nonsense. Secondly, it was thought that Kant's theory of sanctifying grace which is supposed to change one's disposition into a good one would also undercut the core of his ethical system. For, if divine grace intervened in one's motivation or disposition that determines one's moral action, it would allow his motivation to involve a reason to act other than respect for the moral law and hence remove the moral value from the action. That is, in Kant's ethical theory, a moral deed must be done only through one's spontaneous choice, but sanctifying grace seems to prevent the pureness of this moral motivation. Thus, Kant's theory of divine grace had been considered totally incompatible with his ethical system.

It should be noticed, however, that Kant seems to think that divine grace is an inevitable assumption for human reason, which is a faculty of theoretical and practical inference:

⁵ Wolterstorff 1991; Firestone and Jacobs 2008, 94f.

1) von Gnadenwirkungen, 2) Wundern, 3) Geheimnissen, 4) Gnadenmitteln. – Diese sind gleichsam Parerga der Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der reinen Vernunft [...]. Die Vernunft im Bewußtsein ihres Unvermögens, ihrem moralischen Bedürfnis ein Genüge zu tun, dehnt sich bis zu überschwenglichen Ideen [Gnaden usw.] aus, die jenen Mangel ergänzen könnten, ohne sie doch als einen erweiterten Besitze sich zuzueignen. (Rel 6:52Anm.)

(1) On Effects of Grace, (2) On Miracles, (3) On Mysteries, (4) On Means of Grace. — These are, as it were, parerga of religion within the bounds of pure reason [...]. Reason, conscious of its incapacity to assuage its moral need, extends itself up to boundless ideas that might complement this lack, yet without appropriating them to itself as part of an expanded possession. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 145f.)⁶

Kant thinks that the consciousness of reason's incapacity for satisfying its moral need itself leads to assuming divine grace. According to Despland, 'divine grace [...] is to be postulated if we are to keep any hope in the possibility of man's achieving his moral goals.'⁷ These indicate a possibility that if divine grace is interpreted properly, it can not only be compatible with Kant's ethical system, but even play an important role in this system. I shall argue that Kant's critical ethics indeed involves the idea of divine grace intrinsically, and I shall try to show that the alleged conflicts are due to a misunderstanding of the idea of divine grace. My aim is hence not to show the solution of these conflicts, but to indicate that divine grace does not cause these conflicts at all.⁸

⁶ In this paper, Kant's original texts are referred to by a combination of an abbreviation as well as the volume number and page number of the Academy Edition. I list all abbreviations at the end of this paper. 'Gesinnung' in Palmquist's translation has been changed from 'conviction' to 'disposition' in order to keep the consistency of technical terms. Square brackets in quotations indicate my insertion or omission.

⁷ Despland 1973, 228.

⁸ Muchnik and Pasternack point out that the alleged conflicts occur because 'interpreters (from Barth through Quinn, Wolterstorff, Hare, all the way to Firestone/Jacobs) read the *Religion* through a Calvinist lens' (Muchnik & Pasternack 2017, 266) i.e. interpreters have

2. Divine grace in Kant's Religion

According to Palmquist and Pasternack, Kant's idea of divine grace corresponds by and large to (at least one version of) traditional Christian orthodoxy.⁹ Instead of the terms "justifying grace" and "sanctifying grace", Kant uses 'Genugtuung' (atonement) and 'Sinnesänderung' (a change of mentality, i.e. conversion). (cf. Rel 6:66f.)¹⁰

[D]ie eine in Ansehung dessen, was er selbst nicht tun kann, nämlich seine geschehenen Handlungen rechtlich (vor einem göttlichen Richter) ungeschehen zu machen, die andere in Ansehung dessen, was er selbst tun kann und soll, nämlich in einem neuen seiner Pflicht gemäßen Leben zu wandeln. Der erstere Glaube ist der an eine *Genugtuung* (Bezahlung für seine Schuld, Erlösung, Versöhnung mit Gott), der zweite ist der Glaube, in einem ferner zu führenden guten Lebenswandel Gott wohlgefällig werden zu können. (Rel 6:116)

[O]ne in regard to what he cannot do himself, namely make his transpired actions legally (before a divine judge) untranspired; the other in regard to what he can and ought to do, namely to walk in a new life in accordance with his duty. The first faith is faith in an *atonement* (reparation for his guilt, redemption, propitiation by God); the second is faith in being able, in a good lifestyle to be led henceforth, to become satisfactory to God. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 306)

Kant thought divine grace as (1) atonement that makes one's past actions legally undone 'to become satisfactory to God', and (2) conversion resulting in the faith in being able to follow what one ought to do. Kant uses such traditional terms, because

misunderstood Kant's religious position in *Religion*. In this paper I shall point out the misunderstanding about grace from a different point of view.

⁹ Palmquist 2016, 180; Pasternack 2014, 141ff.

¹⁰ I shall use the word "conversion" for 'Sinnesänderung' instead of "change of mentality" (Palmquist 2016, 181) below.

one of his main purposes of *Religion* is, as Palmquist points out, to confirm that a historical faith of revelation can be consistent with the pure religion of reason.¹¹ In other words, using traditional Christian terms, Kant tries to indicate that these correspond with his theory of religion within the bounds of bare reason. And it is noteworthy that according to Kant, divine grace does not have two types but two aspects. Kant thinks that divine grace of atonement and conversion is ‘eben dieselbe praktische Idee, nur in verschiedener Beziehung genommen, durch einen Mißverstand für zwei verschiedene Prinzipien ansieht. / the very same idea, only taken in different relations, as two different principles [through a misunderstanding].’ (Rel 6:119, trans. Palmquist 2016, 314)

Using traditional terms, however, Kant especially stresses a contrast between divine grace and nature.

Was Gutes der Mensch nach Freiheitsgesetzen für sich selbst tun kann, in Vergleichung mit dem Vermögen, welches ihm nur durch übernatürliche Beihilfe möglich ist, kann man *Natur*, zum Unterschied von der *Gnade*, nennen. (Rel 6:190)

¹¹ ‘Aus diesem Standpunkte kann ich nun auch den zweiten Versuch machen, nämlich von irgend einer dafür gehaltenen Offenbarung auszugehen, und, indem ich von der reinen Vernunftreligion [...] abstrahiere, die Offenbarung, als historisches System, an moralische Begriffe bloß fragmentarisch halten und sehen, ob dieses nicht zu demselben reinen Vernunftsystem der Religion zurück führe./ From this standpoint I can also make this second experiment, namely, to start from some alleged revelation or other and, abstracting from the pure religion of reason [...], to hold fragments of this revelation, as a historical system, up to moral concepts, and see whether it does not lead back to the same pure rational system of religion.’ (Rel 6:12, trans. Palmquist 2016, 33) Palmquist sorts Kant’s experiments into two as following. ‘The first experiment will “abstract [...] from all experience” by attempting to construct the “pure rational system of religion” that constitutes the inner circle (or sphere). The second, by “abstracting from pure rational religion,” will attempt to show how the “historical system” given by some revealed religion forms an outer circle/sphere that actually points back to the same rational (inner) core of religious truth.’ (Palmquist 2016, 33)

Whatever good the human being can do on his own according to laws of freedom, as compared with the capacity which is possible for him only through supernatural assistance, can be called *nature* as distinguished from *grace*. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 477)

Kant, throughout his works, is using the term 'nature' in several ways, but in this quotation he takes it in the broadest sense.¹² Though it sounds categorically awkward, he regards nature as the capacity of performing good deeds through the faculty of human freedom. In contrast, divine grace is characterized by 'supernatural assistance' i.e. the capacity beyond the faculty of human freedom. Here Kant does not say that divine grace never interferes with human freedom, but it is clear that divine grace does not concern the human good deeds caused by the faculty of human freedom directly, at least we should not think so. Some support for human good deeds seems to be needed because they seem to be something that, even though the faculty of human freedom fully displays its ability, no one can achieve unaided.

This hypothesis is supported by the following quotation.

Diese allgemeine Anmerkung ist die erste, von den vieren, deren eine jedem Stücke dieser Schrift angehängt ist, und welche die Aufschrift führen könnten: 1) von Gnadenwirkungen, 2) Wundern, 3) Geheimnissen, 4) Gnadenmitteln. – Diese sind gleichsam Parerga der Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der reinen Vernunft; sie gehören nicht innerhalb derselben, aber stoßen doch an sie an. Die Vernunft im Bewußtsein ihres Unvermögens, ihrem moralischen Bedürfnis ein Genüge zu tun, dehnt sich bis zu überschwenglichen Ideen aus, die jenen Mangel ergänzen könnten, ohne sie doch als einen erweiterten Besitze sich zuzueignen. Sie bestreitet nicht die Möglichkeit oder Wirklichkeit der Gegenstände derselben, aber kann sie nur nicht in ihre Maximen zu

¹² E.g. in *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant regards nature as 'der Zusammenhang nach allgemeinen Gesetzen sich einander notwendig bestimmender Erscheinungen/ the connection of appearances necessarily determining one another in accordance with universal laws.' (A451/B479, trans. Guyer 1998, 487)

denken und zu handeln aufnehmen. (Rel 6: 52n.)

This General Comment is the first of the four that are appended to the pieces of this work, one to each, and that could carry the headings: (1) On Effects of Grace, (2) On Miracles, (3) On Mysteries, (4) On Means of Grace. —These are, as it were, *parerga* of religion within the bounds of pure reason; they do not belong within these bounds, but they still *abut on them*. Reason, conscious of its incapacity to assuage its *moral need*, extends itself up to boundless ideas that might complement this lack, yet without appropriating them to itself as part of an *expanded possession*. It does not dispute the possibility or reality of the objects of these ideas; it just cannot take them up into its maxims of thought and of action. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 145f.)

Kant shows several important points in this passage. Firstly, he thinks that divine grace is assumed through a moral need of human reason. It indicates that, even though the faculty of human freedom fully shows its ability, there remains some moral shortcoming. Divine grace would complement this lack of power. This indicates that human reason aims at some moral end by itself. Secondly, Kant dismisses the idea that one should take the concept of divine grace into one's maxims. This means that divine grace can be neither means nor ends of human action; i.e. one must not bring divine grace into practical inferences.¹³ His

¹³ Kant argues that the divine grace is beyond practical inferences. See: '[...] so werden wir außer der allgemeinen Voraussetzung, daß, was die Natur in uns nicht vermag, die Gnade bewirken werde, wenn wir jene (d. i. unsere eigenen Kräfte) nur nach Möglichkeit benutzt haben, von dieser Idee weiter gar keinen Gebrauch machen können: weder wie wir (noch außer der stetigen Bestrebung zum guten Lebenswandel) ihre Mitwirkung auf uns ziehen, noch wie wir bestimmen könnten, in welchen Fällen wir uns ihrer zu gewärtigen haben./ Hence apart from the general presupposition that whatever nature in us has no capacity for will be brought about by grace, provided only that we have employed nature (i.e., our own powers) as far as possible, we will not be able to make any further use at all of this idea, neither for how we could (over and above the constant striving toward the good lifestyle) attract its cooperation, nor how we could determine in what cases we would have to expect it.' (Rel 6:191f., trans. Palmquist 2016, 478)

enigmatic expression in the quotation—that divine grace is not within the religion ‘within’ the bounds of pure reason, but ‘anstoßen/bordering on’ them—may refer to this uselessness. Thirdly, however, Kant maintains that although it cannot be brought into maxims, human reason cannot deny the possibility or even actuality of divine grace.

From these considerations we can understand the relation between nature and divine grace. There is one moral end that every human being aims at through their faculty of freedom—this is the region of nature—; but the faculty is short of the means for achieving the end, and therefore divine grace is inevitably postulated as supernatural support. Thus, divine grace, along with human moral deeds, directs us toward the accomplishment of the moral end.

This relation is an important point, because it makes clear that some interpreters who think that grace undermines human freedom miss the very point. If one understands that divine grace is postulated *after* knowing that the faculty of freedom is unable to achieve the moral end, it follows that divine grace cannot be in conflict with human freedom. Then, the next problems are: *what is the moral end*, and *what is the ‘moral need’*? In order to answer these questions, first of all, we must look back on Kant’s ethical argument of the highest good.

3. The Highest Good as Final End

While the highest good is a familiar theme for philosophers, especially in antiquity, for Kant it is *a unification of virtue and happiness in completeness*.¹⁴ It should be

¹⁴ In the second Critique, Kant defines the highest good as follows: ‘[s]o fern nun Tugend und Glückseligkeit zusammen den Besitz des höchsten Guts in einer Person, hiebei aber auch Glückseligkeit, ganz genau in Proportion der Sittlichkeit (als Wert der Person und deren Würdigkeit, glücklich zu sein) ausgeteilt, das höchste Gut einer möglichen Welt ausmachen: so bedeutet dieses das Ganze, das vollendete Gute./ Now, inasmuch as virtue and happiness

noted that it is not a principle for determining a motivation for action, but an object after the moral law has first been established by itself.¹⁵ And since it is thought that the highest good involves the sum of all ends, it follows that the moral end is involved in it. However, it is not obvious why Kant establishes the highest good as a unification of virtue and happiness, and why human reason must aim at it. The following quotations are helpful in order to grasp the structure of the highest good.

together constitute possession of the highest good in a person, and happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the highest good of a possible world, the latter means the whole, the complete good.’ (KpV 5:110f., trans. Gregor 1996, 229)

¹⁵ Kant rules out that one presupposes the highest good as the ground of the moral law. ‘Diese Anmerkung [...] erklärt auf einmal den veranlassenden Grund aller Verirrungen der Philosophen in Ansehung des obersten Prinzips der Moral. Denn sie suchten einen Gegenstand des Willens auf, um ihn zur Materie und dem Grunde eines Gesetzes zu machen [...], anstatt daß sie zuerst nach einem Gesetze hätten forschen sollen, das a priori und unmittelbar den Willen, und diesem gemäß allererst den Gegenstand bestimmte. Nun mochten sie diesen Gegenstand der Lust, der den obersten Begriff des Guten abgeben sollte, in der Glückseligkeit, in der Vollkommenheit, im moralischen Gefühl, oder im Willen Gottes setzen, so war ihr Grundsatz allemal Heteronomie, sie mußten unvermeidlich auf empirische Bedingungen zu einem moralischen Gesetze stoßen [...]. Nur ein formales Gesetz, d. i. ein solches, welches der Vernunft nichts weiter als die Form ihrer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung zur obersten Bedingung der Maximen vorschreibt, kann a priori ein Bestimmungsgrund der praktischen Vernunft sein./ This remark [...] explains at once the occasioning ground of all the errors of philosophers with respect to the supreme principle of morals. For they sought an object of the will in order to make it into the matter and the ground of a law [...], whereas they should first have searched for a law that determined the will a priori and immediately, and only then determined the object conformable to the will. Now, whether they placed this object of pleasure, which was to yield the supreme concept of good, in happiness, in perfection, in moral feeling, or in the will of God, their principle was in every case heteronomy and they had to come unavoidably upon empirical conditions for a moral law [...]. Only a formal law, that is, one that prescribes to reason nothing more than the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims, can be a priori a determining ground of practical reason.’ (KpV 5:64, trans. Gregor 1996, 191f.)

[D]enn die Beurteilung *des Verhältnisses der Mittel zu Zwecken gehört allerdings zur Vernunft*. Obgleich aber Vernunft allein vermögend ist, die Verknüpfung der Mittel mit ihren Absichten einzusehen (so daß man auch den Willen durch das Vermögen der Zwecke definieren könnte, indem sie jederzeit Bestimmungsgründe des Begehrungsvermögens nach Prinzipien sind). (KpV 5:58f.)

[F]or, appraisal *of the relation of means to ends certainly belongs to reason*. But, although reason alone is capable of discerning the connection of means with their purposes (so that *the will could also be defined as the faculty of ends*, inasmuch as these are always determining grounds of the faculty of desire in accordance with principles). (trans. Gregor 1996, 187)

In this passage, Kant defines the will as the faculty of ends that manages the relation of means to ends. The point is that reason grasps means and ends in an inferential relation: every means is a condition for accomplishing some end. And in the next passage, Kant imposes a familiar property of reason.

Die reine Vernunft hat jederzeit ihre Dialektik, man mag sie in ihrem spekulativen oder praktischen Gebrauche betrachten; denn sie verlangt die absolute Totalität der Bedingungen zu einem gegebenen Bedingten, und diese kann schlechterdings nur in Dingen an sich selbst angetroffen werden. (KpV 5:107)

Pure reason always has its dialectic, whether it is considered in its speculative or in its practical use; *for it requires the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditioned*, and this can be found only in things in themselves. (trans. Gregor 1996, 226)

In the same manner as in the first *Critique*, practical reason, i.e. the will, requires the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditioned. Since any means are conditions for ends, reason requires the absolute totality of ends. Then, our final ends can be expressed in two elements: happiness and virtue. While our inclinations as animals make us desire to be happy, i.e. get our sensible deficiencies satisfied,

our reason as rationality wills to obtain virtue. Now, the structure of the highest good can be understood. Since our reason, as a faculty of ends, requires the absolute totality of means, the final ends i.e. happiness and virtue that stem from our two natural predispositions are required in a unification. This is the highest good.¹⁶

As a result, '[z]ur Pflicht gehört hier nur die Bearbeitung zur Hervorbringung und Beförderung des höchsten Guts in der Welt/ [w]hat belongs to duty here is only the striving to produce and promote the highest good in the world.' (KpV 5:126, trans. Gregor 1996, 241) Then, the next problem is: how can the highest good be accomplished? It must be able to be accomplished because this is a duty of practical reason. Kant tries to answer this question through solving the antinomy of pure practical reason.

Aus dieser Auflösung der Antinomie der praktischen reinen Vernunft folgt, daß sich in praktischen Grundsätzen eine natürliche und notwendige Verbindung zwischen dem Bewußtsein der Sittlichkeit, und der Erwartung einer ihr proportionierten Glückseligkeit, als Folge derselben, wenigstens als möglich denken [...] lasse: dagegen, daß Grundsätze der Bewerbung um Glückseligkeit unmöglich Sittlichkeit hervorbringen können. (KpV 5:119)

From this resolution of the antinomy of practical pure reason it follows that in practical principles a natural and necessary connection between the consciousness of morality and the expectation of a happiness proportionate to it as its result can at least be thought as possible [...]; that, on the other hand, principles of the pursuit of happiness cannot possibly produce morality. (trans. Gregor 1996, 235)

The problem in the Antinomy is to decide the priority between happiness and virtue on the assumption that they are united in a morally appropriate order. Kant gives priority to virtue. And, he continues that it is allowed that the expectation of

¹⁶ I have discussed the ambiguity in the expression 'the highest good' before. (Nakano 2019; cf. KpV 5:110)

happiness proportionate to virtue as its result is possible. In other words, if one makes an effort to accomplish a completeness of virtue, happiness could follow because it is a morally appropriate order. Regarding this order, Kant discusses some examples and one of them is about proportion between a bad person and bad luck.¹⁷

Wenn aber jemand, der friedliebende Leute gerne neckt und beunruhigt, endlich einmal anläuft und mit einer tüchtigen Tracht Schläge abgefertigt wird, so ist dieses allerdings ein Übel, aber jedermann gibt dazu seinen Beifall und hält es an sich für gut, wenn auch nichts weiter daraus entspringe; ja selbst der, der sie empfängt, muß in seiner Vernunft erkennen, daß ihm recht geschehe, weil er die Proportion zwischen dem Wohlbefinden und Wohlverhalten, welche die Vernunft ihm unvermeidlich vorhält, hier genau in Ausübung gebracht sieht. (KpV 5:61)

But if someone who likes to vex and disturb peace-loving people finally gets a sound thrashing for one of his provocations, this is certainly an ill, *yet everyone would approve of it and take it as good in itself even if nothing further resulted from it*; indeed, even the one who received it must in his reason recognize that *justice was done to him, because he sees the proportion between well-being and acting well*, which reason unavoidably holds before him, here put into practice exactly. (trans. Gregor 1996, 189)

Kant shows that punishment or retribution of the bad person is convincing for everyone, even for the very person, because of its morally appropriate proportion

¹⁷ Kant explains this in similar examples many times, e.g. 'in der Tat kann der Rechtschaffene sich nicht glücklich finden, wenn er sich nicht zuvor seiner Rechtschaffenheit bewußt ist; weil, bei jener Gesinnung, die Verweise, die er bei Übertretungen sich selbst zu machen durch seine eigene Denkungsart genötigt sein würde, und die moralische Selbstverdammung ihn alles Genusses der Annehmlichkeit, die sonst sein Zustand enthalten mag, berauben würden./ in fact an upright man cannot be happy if he is not first conscious of his uprightness; for, with such a disposition, the censure that his own cast of mind would force him to bring against himself in case of a transgression, and his moral self-condemnation would deprive him of all enjoyment of the agreeableness that his state might otherwise contain.' (KpV 5:116, trans. Gregor 1996, 233; cf. G 4:454)

between his action and happiness. Thus, if one aims at the highest good, the only thing the agent must do is to make efforts to accomplish the completeness of virtue. Only after satisfying this, one can expect a satisfaction of happiness in an appropriate order.

It is noteworthy that it is often misunderstood that Kant allegedly excludes happiness completely in his ethical theory. However, it is obvious that Kant requires happiness as a necessary part for the highest good. And he says:

[D]iese Unterscheidung des Glückseligkeitsprinzips von dem der Sittlichkeit, ist darum nicht sofort Entgegensetzung beider, und die reine praktische Vernunft will nicht, man solle die Ansprüche auf Glückseligkeit aufgeben, sondern nur, so bald von Pflicht die Rede ist, darauf gar nicht Rücksicht nehmen. (KpV 5:93)

[T]his distinction of the principle of happiness from that of morality is *not* [...] at once *an opposition between them*, and pure practical reason does not require that one should renounce claims to happiness but *only that as soon as duty is in question one should take no account of them* [happiness]. (trans. Gregor 1996, 214)

It follows from this quotation that he does not think that happiness should be neglected absolutely, but that as far as a duty is brought into question, comparing with morality, happiness should be neglected.¹⁸

As a result, we have an answer to one of the questions I mentioned above, namely the one about the moral end. It is to accomplish the highest good i.e. an appropriate proportion of virtue and happiness in completeness. For the sake of it, all things we human beings can do is to promote virtue toward its completeness. On the other hand, in order to answer the other of the questions, i.e. the one about a moral need, it is necessary to pursue a further problem about a difficulty in

¹⁸ Engstrom argues that virtue and happiness relate closely from the standpoint of self-love. (Engstrom 1992)

promoting virtue.

4. Difficulties and Divine Grace

A need occurs when one is in a poor condition or exposed to a difficult task beyond one's power. Kant thinks that we are in two of such poor conditions for promoting virtue toward completeness and hence are faced with two difficult steps. In this vein, I shall follow his lead in order to clarify the two steps and finally I shall describe the role of divine grace in his ethics. Firstly, I shall argue about radical evil as the first step. Since it is a very big issue, I shall only briefly touch on where the argument relates to the question of divine grace. We shall confirm that human beings have all the responsibility for their own evilness, so they have a chance to recovery from the radical evil by themselves. Here, we shall see that the problem of divine grace is not the same as that of radical evil; rather it is a problem for those who have already decided to try to obey good principles, even though both problems are related very closely. Secondly, I shall argue about divine grace as the second step. This difficulty involves three issues that we must face when we aim at the completeness of virtue. Subsequently, we shall examine the solution that Kant suggests and crucial interpretations of it. Finally, we shall formulate our interpretation about divine grace and enumerate its minimum features.

4.1 Radical evil as the first difficult step

Kant thinks that the primary obstacle for aiming at the highest good is the radical evil in all human beings. Human beings are radically evil only because of a reversal of the appropriate moral order between self-love and morality.

Also muß der Unterschied, ob der Mensch gut oder böse sei, nicht in dem Unterschiede

der Triebfedern, die er in seine Maxime aufnimmt (nicht in dieser ihrer Materie), sondern in der *Unterordnung* (der Form derselben) liegen: *welche von beiden er zur Bedingung der anderen macht*. Folglich ist der Mensch (auch der beste) nur dadurch böse, daß er die sittliche Ordnung der Triebfedern, in der Aufnehmung derselben in seine Maximen, umkehrt: das moralische Gesetz zwar neben dem der Selbstliebe in dieselbe aufnimmt; da er aber inne wird, daß eines neben dem anderen nicht bestehen kann, sondern eines dem anderen als seiner obersten Bedingung untergeordnet werden müsse, er die Triebfeder der Selbstliebe und ihre Neigungen zur Bedingung der Befolgung des moralischen Gesetzes macht, da das letztere vielmehr als die *oberste Bedingung* der Befriedigung der ersteren in die allgemeine Maxime der Willkür als alleinige Triebfeder aufgenommen werden sollte. (Rel 6:36)

Therefore the distinction as to whether the human being is good or evil must lie not in the distinction of the incentives that he takes up into his maxim (not in the maxim's matter), but in their *subordination* (in the maxim's form): which of the two he makes the condition of the other. Consequently *the human being (even the best) is evil only because he reverses the morals order of the incentives in taking them up into his maxims*: he does indeed take up the moral law into his maxims, alongside the law of self - love; but when he realizes that one cannot exist alongside the other, but that one must be *subordinated* to the other as its supreme condition, *he makes the incentive of self - love* and its inclinations the condition of compliance with the moral law—whereas, on the contrary, the latter should be taken up into the universal maxim of volition as the supreme condition of the appeasement of the former and as the sole incentive. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 94)

According to this quotation, we can understand the following three points.

1. Human beings can take up two kinds of incentives into their maxim. These are the moral law and sense impulses, i.e. the incentive of self-love.
2. The relation of their subordination determines whether one is good or evil.
3. To be evil is to make a reversal of the appropriate moral order, so that the moral law gets subordinated to the law of self-love as its supreme condition.

Moreover, Kant seems to think that human evilness is not a necessary condition of

human nature but just a contingent but wide-spread condition of human nature.¹⁹

Unter einem *Hange* (propensio) verstehe ich den subjektiven Grund der Möglichkeit einer Neigung (habituellen Begierde, concupiscentia), sofern sie für die Menschheit überhaupt zufällig ist. [...] Es ist aber hier nur vom Hange zum eigentlich, d. i. zum Moralisch-Bösen, die Rede (Rel 6:28f.)

By propensity I understand the subjective basis for the possibility of an inclination insofar as this possibility is *contingent* for humanity overall. [...] Here, however, the issue is only the propensity to actual evil, i.e., to moral-evil. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 72–75)

In this passage, Kant defines ‘Hang/propensity’ as the subjective basis that enables human beings to have a contingent inclination. He regards the radical evil as a propensity. (Rel 6:29) Then, Kant examines the proposition ‘he is evil by nature.’

Er ist von Natur böse, heißt so viel als: dieses gilt von ihm in seiner Gattung betrachtet; nicht als ob solche Qualität aus seinem Gattungsbegriffe (dem eines Menschen überhaupt) könne gefolgert werden (denn alsdann wäre sie notwendig), sondern er kann nach dem, wie man ihn durch Erfahrung kennt, nicht anders beurteilt werden, oder man kann es, als subjektiv notwendig, in jedem, auch dem besten Menschen, voraussetzen. (Rel 6:32)

He is evil by nature; this means the same as: this holds for him considered in his genus—not as if, from the concept of his genus (the concept of a human being generally), such a quality can be inferred (for then it would be necessary); rather, according to what awareness we have of him *through experience*, we cannot judge him otherwise, or we may presuppose this as subjectively necessary in every human being, even in the best. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 83)

¹⁹ I shall enquire what contingency is below. I think that human evilness is a contingent but not eradicable propensity of human nature.

Then, we can grasp a further point.

4. Indeed, through experience we must judge subjectively that human beings as genus are evil by nature, but objectively, we must judge that evilness of human beings is contingent for humanity.

From these points, we can confirm Kant's *reversal model* of evil. It makes Kant's position clear in relation to the notion of original sin; evilness is not an inevitable disaster that human beings are set on by birth, as Augustin thought. Hence Kant denies the Augustinian interpretation of original sin; rather it is a consequence of reversing the moral order.²⁰ Evil is, indeed, universally spread in human beings as genus, but it can be confronted by each and every human being because of its contingency. Nonetheless, it cannot be abolished.

Now, we should consider the contingency of evil. Why can evil be regarded as contingent? Kant repeatedly states that evil is contingent for humanity, but, of course, this alone cannot be an evidence that it is really so. Is the argument for evilness a quasi-a priori, or quasi-transcendental argument, as Palmquist suggests?²¹ Or it is not objective but merely subjective and psychological?²² We might be able to understand it better if we consider the contingency as being not an affirmative predicate. For example, a shadow is cast where a light falls. Light can be seen as the indirect cause of a shadow because it is cast only on condition of a light. However, light need not involve a shadow as an intrinsic affirmative predicate,

²⁰ Some commentators regard Kant's position as Pelagian rather than Augustinian. (cf. Pasternack 2014) Stevenson carefully denies that Kant is completely Pelagian, because Pelagius thinks that human beings start from innocence, and Kant does not approve of this thesis; for him, human beings start from evil. (Stevenson 2014)

²¹ Palmquist 2016, 84.

²² Allison doubted Kant's claim about the universality of evilness. Seeming to identify disposition with propensity, Allison criticizes that Kant does not show an a priori ground of the universality of evilness. (Allison 1990, chap. 8)

since a shadow is cast only if there is some obstacle in the way of light. Therefore, light is contingently accompanied by a shadow;²³ in a sense, a shadow is the absence of light. According to this example, we can understand the contingency of evilness. Evil is absence of good; it is of course not an intrinsic affirmative predicate of good. It arises only if there is some obstacle, i.e. our reversal of the moral order. Hence, evil is contingently accompanied with our choice of action and is not involved in our natural predisposition itself. In this manner, Kant shows that evil is an object to be faced by every human being.

This reversal model is often charged with not being able to explain the evil catastrophes which occurred in human history. Interpreters regard this model as too optimistic a way of thinking. However, this is not the case. Palmquist indicates the reason why it cannot be thought as optimistic.

Human evil arises as a perversion of an originally good predisposition, but without removing goodness from the depths of our conviction disposition. [...] First, many who think that they are rejecting or doubting Kant's argument are not responding to the view he actually defends. Kant is not saying that human beings never exhibit diabolical behavior, for he explicitly lists various "diabolical vices" (R 27.25–6), some of which are quite common. (Palmquist, 2015, 97)

Palmquist thinks that Kant's reversal model relates only to 'a perversion of an originally good predisposition,' but it does not prevent that human beings actually 'exhibit diabolical behavior.' That is, as I will argue in §4.3, the explanation about evil by the model concerns only the human disposition as a thing in itself, hence no one can invoke actual evil catastrophes to refute this model because they are appearances. Therefore, it still stands as a convincing model.

Thus, human evil, even when radical, belongs to human decisions about the

²³ It can be expressed in terms of modern metaphysics: a shadow is in the unilateral relation of formal–ontological dependence on a light.

moral order between the principles. Therefore, evil consists neither in the human diabolical behavior as manifested in the catastrophes of the past nor in human predispositions such like their animality. Rather, evil must be a matter to be confronted by every human being continuously. Although every human being can struggle against evil, there is another difficulty. Then, we need to advance to the next stage.

4.2 The second difficulty in aiming at completeness of virtue

There is still another difficulty in order to believe rationally that completeness of virtue, hence also the highest good, is a possible end to accomplish. The reason is that the distance between a human being, having started from an evil disposition, and the completeness of virtue is infinite. It is noteworthy that this is not the difficulty about the radical evil as our contingent but not eradicable propensity; rather it is a difficulty concerning our struggle for virtue. The stage has changed. In order to obtain a rational hope to accomplish the highest good we must solve the following three variants of a new difficulty.

1. Although there is infinite distance to completeness of virtue, can I attain it by my moral efforts?
2. Does my decision to act in accordance with morally good principle have stability?
3. Even if I will always act in accordance with morally good principles, is it probable that my past wrongdoing will stay as an eternally remaining stain and will prevent me from accomplishing completeness of virtue in principle?

These variants seem to undercut any possibility of accomplishing the highest good in principle. Kant deals with them as a problem of divine grace, which every

historical religious faith has mentioned. He thus converts the traditional idea of divine grace into one which fits his ethical system well.

4.3 Solution of the three variants of the second difficulty

Let us look at Kant's solution of the three variants of the difficulty first; then I shall examine some interpretations of it. He introduces a well-known distinction as a key for solving them. It is the distinction of appearances and things in themselves.²⁴ As he solved the antinomy of pure reason in the first Critique with this distinction, in *Religion*, he also solves the difficulties with it, reconsidering it as a distinction of (1) a standpoint of human actions; from which human beings judge by themselves whether their past actions are good or bad and (2) a standpoint of human disposition with regard to which God judges whether it is good or bad. Here, it is understood that actual actions human beings have performed correspond to appearances, and the human disposition as a principle of actions corresponds to things in themselves. Then, he solves the difficulties as follows. Judging from the standpoint of human actions, our actions must be regarded as on the path of infinite progress toward the complete good at best; hence, everyone is always judged as guilty because of past wrongdoings. However, if we introduce the standpoint of human disposition, we get to have a possibility not to be judged as guilty. From the latter standpoint, we can be judged as a whole, that is, the disposition that one follows a principle of one's actions is judged, and not the sum of one's all past actions. Then, if one's disposition could change from bad to good by a human being's own efforts, one would achieve complete virtue. In this section, I shall argue that Kant thinks that

²⁴ From here, I will not touch on the argument about appearance and thing in itself i.e. whether the distinction of them should be interpreted in terms of a two worlds view or a two aspects view. But, in the pertinent literature it has basically been seen from the latter. (cf. Pasternack 2014; DiCenso 2012)

this can be the case, i.e. that one's disposition can change by human efforts alone in everyday life.

It is noteworthy that Kant does not take it for granted, or at least he does not think that we can be convinced that we will necessarily be judged from the standpoint of the human disposition. Rather, he thinks that it is just 'ein Urteilsspruch aus Gnade/ a verdict of grace.' (Rel 6:76, trans. Palmquist 2016, 208)

Sondern nur Empfänglichkeit, welche alles ist, was wir unsrerseits uns beilegen können; der Ratschluß aber eines Oberen zu Erteilung eines Guten, wozu der Untergeordnete nichts weiter als die (moralische) Empfänglichkeit hat, heißt Gnade. (Rel 6:75)

But we have only *receptivity*, which is all that we, for our part, can attribute to ourselves; but the decree of a superior to bestow a good for which the subordinate has nothing but the (moral) receptivity is called grace. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 208)

Thus, human beings 'have only receptivity' to be judged from the standpoint of their disposition. That 'the decree of a superior' is needed means that we have just a possibility but not a convinced knowledge about the judgment. To sum up, Kant thinks that the distinction of the standpoints solves the second difficulty. We shall therefore assign the solution to it.

4.3.1 First variant of the second difficulty

Although there is an infinite distance to completeness of virtue, can I attain it by my moral efforts?

Indeed, our moral efforts will never finish because of the infinite distance from the starting point to the completeness of virtue; so, it will remain 'ein kontinuierlicher Fortschritt/ a continual progress' (Rel 6:67, trans. Palmquist 2016, 181) in everyday life. However, one can change one's disposition to good *through these very efforts*.

And now, since we can understand the distinction of the standpoints, we can hope rationally that we have the possibility to be judged from the standpoint of the human disposition. Thus, the first variant has been solved: I can change my disposition from bad to good by myself, therefore I have the possibility to attain the completeness of virtue from this standpoint.

4.3.2 Second variant of the second difficulty

Does my decision to act in accordance with morally good principle have stability?

As Pasternack thinks, the second variant is a bit different from the other ones (Pasternack 2014, 148). Still, the distinction works and is presupposed, but does not appear at the forefront. Now, the matter is how one understands one's own disposition. Kant accepts neither that one can have an absolute certainty of one's disposition nor that one can have any confidence of one's disposition; rather he takes a middle path. In other words, he denies two extreme views—having too much confidence and lacking all confidence—because both are morally of no use; rather he takes a 'morally healthy degree of confidence.' (Palmquist 2016, 185) That is, he accepts a moderate confidence by inference from one's empirical behavior.

About the stability of a good disposition, Kant responds as follows.

Die gute und lautere Gesinnung (die man einen guten uns regierenden Geist nennen kann), deren man sich bewußt ist, führt also auch das Zutrauen zu ihrer Beharrlichkeit und Festigkeit obzwar nur mittelbar bei sich, und ist der Tröster (Paraklet), wenn uns unsere Fehlritte wegen ihrer Beharrlichkeit besorgt machen. (Rel 6:70f.)

Thus the good and ingenuous disposition of which one is conscious (and which may be called a good spirit governing us) also carries with it, *although only mediately, trust in its persistence and firmness*, and is the Comforter (Paraclete) when our lapses make us worried about its persistence. (trans. Palmquist 2016, 193f.)

A good disposition ‘trust[s] in its persistence and firmness.’ Since we can infer our disposition through considering our past empirical behavior, we can have a moderate confidence in the stability of our good disposition in a mediate manner. Thus, the second variant has been solved: I can have a moderate confidence in my disposition through my past empirical behavior, and the idea of a good disposition assures its stability by itself, so I can have a moderate confidence of the stability of my good disposition.

4.3.3 Third variant of the second difficulty

Even if I will always act in accordance with morally good principles, is it probable that my past wrongdoing will stay as an eternally remaining stain and will prevent me from accomplishing completeness of virtue in principle?

One half of problem might be solved by the distinction of the standpoints straight away: even though there were past wrong doings from the standpoint of human actions, from the standpoint of the disposition, we can be judged as completely good if we have made moral efforts. However, there still remains a problem: if God did not punish one for one’s past sin, it would follow that His justice would not have been done. Kant express this doubt as ‘ob die moralische Folge der ersteren [böse Gesinnung], die Strafe [...], auch auf seinen Zustand in der gebesserten Gesinnung könne gezogen werden, in der er schon ein Gegenstand des göttlichen Wohlgefallens ist./ whether the moral consequence of the evil disposition, i.e., the punishment [...], can be extended even to his state in the amended disposition, in which he is already an object of divine satisfaction.’ (Rel 6:73, trans. Palmquist 2016, 197) It is noteworthy that the problem is not the timing of punishment, rather an incomprehensibility about the relation between punishment through divine

justice and the improved human being.²⁵ While we think that, from the standpoint of justice, any sin should be punished by God who is omniscient and can judge human dispositions exactly; we cannot agree that a good-hearted man should be punished.

Kant answers this problem with the motif of the crucifixion of Jesus interpreting it in a moral way. That is, as Jesus accepted punishment of crucifixion because of his virtue, although he does not deserve to be punished, a person who has converted—called a ‘new man’—and hence does not deserve to be punished as a substitute for the old man who is before the conversion, hence is physically the same but morally a different person, would accept the punishment because of his virtue. However, he would grasp it not as punishment, but as one of the moral tasks through which one can get ‘viel Anlässe der Prüfung und Übung seiner Gesinnung zum Guten/ many occasions for testing and practicing his disposition toward the good.’ (Rel 6:75Anm., trans. Palmquist 2016, 206)

In order to understand this, we need to look at Kant's conception of moral happiness. Moral happiness means ‘die Versicherung [...] von der Wirklichkeit und Beharrlichkeit einer im Guten immer fortrückenden (nie daraus fallenden) Gesinnung/ [the] assurance of the reality and persistence of a disposition that always advances in the good (never falls away from it).’ (Rel 6:67, trans. Palmquist 2016, 183f.) That is, moral happiness is that one has confidence about one's moral stability, hence one is satisfied with the one's very state. It contrasts with physical

²⁵ Palmquist seems to think the problem is the timing of punishment, i.e. the problem is ‘that the punishment is effected either before or after a person's conversion experience.’ Since ‘[p]unishment before the change of heart would be too early [...] and punishment afterwards would be too late,’ so he thought that it might be effected ‘during a person's conversion experience.’ (Palmquist 2015, 198f.) However, this is not the point. Kant focuses on the incomprehensibility of the relation between punishment through divine justice and the amended man.

happiness, which is ‘die Versicherung eines immerwährenden Besitzes der Zufriedenheit mit seinem physischen Zustande (Befreiung von Übeln und Genuß immer wachsender Vergnügen)/ [the] assurance of an everlasting possession of contentment with one’s physical state (liberation from ills and enjoyment of ever - increasing pleasures).’ (ibid.)

In a note, Kant states that the moral task which was punishment of the old man are ‘die Wirkung und zugleich die Ursache/ the effect and simultaneously the cause’ of moral happiness. (Rel 6:75Anm., trans. Palmquist 2016, 206) This may mean that accomplishing the moral task is the cause of one’s moral happiness and the very overcoming testifies of one’s moral happiness as being satisfied. In other words, since the responsibility for human past sins cannot be shifted onto other people, accepting it as one’s eternally remaining moral task turns into the only and very way of one’s moral progress toward the good. Through the progress one can gain moral happiness as an effect, i.e. a state of being satisfied with one’s moral efforts. Thus, the third variant has been solved: while I can change my disposition to good by myself and can be judged to be completely good from the standpoint of disposition, God’s justice regarding my past sin can be done by my accepting punishment as a moral task, and hence as the effect and cause of moral happiness.

It is noteworthy that one’s struggle with one’s moral tasks does not have to mean a compensation for one’s past sins. No past sin needs to be eliminated. There is no need for divine forgiveness or compensation of human actions. This is one of the most controversial issues among commentators: whether one’s past sin can be atoned, i.e. be turned to zero. DiCenso states: ‘[a]ssuming we have made a determined choice to shift our supreme maxim from evil to good, then this alternation in our fundamental disposition atones for whatever evils we have enacted in the past.’ (DiCenso 2012, 116) Obviously then, he does think that one can turn one’s past sin to zero. On the contrary, Pasternack states that ‘[t]he debt of sin is not somehow repaid in the suffering that goes along with the Change of Heart.

It is not repaid through Christ's Vicarious Atonement. It is not forgiven through a "Divine Supplement". (Pasternack 2014, 158) Hence, he denies that nothing can turn one's past sin to zero. In addition, Pasternack thinks that divine grace is that 'God's sees one's true *Gesinnung* [disposition] and judges it accordingly.' (ibid., 158; cf. ibid., 157) Wood refutes the latter view. Wood maintains that divine grace is 'God's voluntary choice to accept the Change of Heart and forgive the human sinner.' (Wood 2015) That is, Wood refuses Pasternack's idea of God's role of just seeing one's conversion. For, according to Wood, Pasternack thinks that 'God's only role is cognitive' and 'it is not in the least volitional.' (ibid.)

Thus, interpreters are divided on this matter. However, from the standpoint of human motivation, we should—in my opinion—take the following position. Firstly, we should not think that the past sin will be turned to zero, as DiCenso thought. For, as mentioned in the discussion of the first difficulty, we have only the possibility to be judged in accordance with our disposition, from which it does not follow that our past sin as appearance is erased. And if we had certainty of eradicating our past sin, the health of our moral motivation would be spoiled as we have seen in the second difficulty. Secondly, we should not limit God's volitional action to a dynamic action. i.e. forgiveness, as Wood thought. For, it can be thought easily that to judge only one's disposition but not one's sum of past actions is as volitional as a decision as to forgive one's past sin. That is, one can be convinced that to judge only one's disposition is a divine volitional action. Moreover, Wood's explanation involved a far too humanistic example; he likens divine forgiveness to forgiveness in our everyday friendships. It may render our understanding of God too anthropomorphic, and it will also spoil the health of our moral motivation. Therefore, we should stick to the idea that the role of divine grace is a possibility to judge our disposition, as Pasternack thinks. And about our past sin, we have no idea whether it turns to zero or not. For, it is the most morally healthy way of thinking.

There is another point to be checked. Pasternack points out that there are two

‘important differences between the soteriologies—i.e. doctrines about salvation—presented in’ the second *Critique* and *Religion*. (Pasternack 2014, 143) One concerns ‘what is required of us in order to become well-pleasing to God.’ (ibid.) In the second *Critique*, it is required of us to pursue a perfection of virtue; in *Religion*, besides that, it is required of us to convert one’s heart. The other one concerns the soteriological model. In the second *Critique*, we should ‘strive through eternity in order to asymptotically approach’ the perfection of virtue—we can call it the asymptotical model. (ibid.) Hence, divine aid is needed as the last step of the eternal path. On the contrary, in *Religion*, the model is changed to a spontaneous revolution of one’s heart—we can call it the bipolar model. According to Pasternack, since one can change one’s mind by one’s own efforts, divine aid is not needed, at least for conversion itself. However, Pasternack’s distinction of two models does not seem to fit both texts. Indeed, in the second *Critique*, Kant mainly deals with the asymptotical model, but he also uses the bipolar model. Kant distinguishes one’s empirical ‘unwandelbaren Vorsatze/ [immutable] attitude’ and ‘der (Gott allein übersehbaren) Unendlichkeit seiner Fortdauer/ the infinity of his [one’s] continuance (which God alone can survey),’ i.e. one’s disposition. (KpV 5:123., trans. Gregor 1996, 238f.) Moreover, in *Religion* Kant uses both models corresponding to the distinction of the standpoints of actions and disposition. The asymptotical model still works with regard to the standpoint of actions, and the bipolar model works with regard to the standpoint of the disposition. Therefore, Pasternack’s distinction of two models can be accepted only if we think that Kant uses both models from the 1780s to 1790s, rather than that Kant changes the soteriological model.

Now, let us return to the important problems from above: (1) what is the moral need? (mentioned in §2), (2) do both of the alleged conflicts occur (mentioned in §1)? Firstly, we shall answer what the moral need is. It is the inevitable gap between us and the highest good because of two difficulties i.e. the radical evil and the

infinite distance from our bad disposition as our starting point to the completeness of virtue. Then, our results show that we must at least hope to have the possibility of being judged in accordance with our disposition i.e. we must assume divine grace. Secondly, we shall show that both of the alleged conflicts do not occur. Since divine grace does not affect the region of the faculty of freedom, and is an object of hope that fills the blanks between our faculty and our final end, divine grace does not conflict with either freedom or autonomy. Therefore, since divine grace does not intervene in our free decisions and moral efforts, the alleged conflicts never occur.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of divine grace needs to satisfy the following necessary conditions in order to fit into Kant's ethical system:

1. For the sake of our duty to accomplish the highest good, divine grace must be assumed in order to compensate where this is beyond all human moral efforts.
2. Divine grace must neither eradicate our past sin—corresponding to justification in Christian orthodoxy—nor intervene in our motivation to act morally—corresponding to sanctification in Christian orthodoxy. It needs to be completely independent of our free decision.
3. Divine grace is a judgement of our disposition and not of the sum of our past actions.
4. Divine grace cannot be an item of practical inference.

We can hence summarize the role of divine grace as follows. In the process of aiming at the highest good, all human beings are starting from a morally bad disposition (the radical evil), hence they must face an infinite distance to the completeness of virtue. This occasion makes them inevitably postulate the idea of

divine grace as an object of hope to seek to accomplish the end rationally. The results indicate that Kant's ethics does indeed involve the idea of divine grace.

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Abbreviations

A/B: Critique of Pure Reason 1st and 2nd edition respectively.

G: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.

KpV: Critique of Practical Reason.

Rel: Religion Within the Boundaries of Bare Reason.

* All italics in quotations are added by me.

(Doctoral student, Graduate School of Letters, Keio University)