

Kant's sharp criticism of Judaism would be to the point only if one were to ignore completely (as he himself does) the long line of Jewish self-criticism beginning with the eighth century prophets and including, in a way, Jesus. In fact, the main point of Kant's criticism is really simply the point already repeatedly made by these Jewish prophets. Ironically, then, his basic religious outlook is itself eminently Jewish, or, if you will, Pharisaic, as distinct from Christian, in Marxsen's sense of this distinction.

This is nowhere more obvious than when Kant discusses grace, God's love, and so on. Thus he says, for example, "in the moral religion . . . it is a basic principle that each must do as much as lies in his power to become a better man, and that only when he has not buried his inborn talent (Lk 19:12-16) but has made use of his original predisposition to good in order to become a better man, can he hope that what is not within his power will be supplied through cooperation from above" (47). Or, again, he says that an individual "with all respect for such a superabundant [*überschwenglich*] atonement, and with every wish that it be available for him also," can only "regard it as conditioned. That is, he must believe that he must first improve his way of life, so far as improvement lies in his power, if he is to have even the slightest ground for hope of such a higher gain" (107; cf. 108 f.). Or, yet again, he tells us that "the sacred narrative . . . must at all times be taught and expounded in the interest of morality; and yet . . . it must be inculcated painstakingly and repeatedly that true religion is to consist not in the knowing or considering of what God does or has done for our salvation but in what we must do to become worthy of it" (123). As for God's being love, Kant expressly speaks of God as "the loving One . . . whose love is that of moral *approbation* of men so far as they measure up to His holy law" (136). Finally, there is his last statement in the book, that "the right course is not to go from grace to virtue but rather to progress from virtue to pardoning grace" (190).

10 June 2000