

with morality. And at the same time he renders unnecessary everything that the skeptical atheist attacks. For he needs no speculative proofs of God's existence. He is convinced of it with certainty, because otherwise he would have to reject the necessary laws of morality which are grounded in the nature of his being. Thus he derives theology from morality, yet not from speculative but from practical evidence; not through knowledge, but through faith. But a necessary practical hypothesis is with regard to our practical knowledge what an axiom is with respect to speculative knowledge. Hence the existence of a wise governor of the world is a *necessary postulate of practical reason*.

First Part: Transcendental Theology

In this knowledge of God from pure concepts, we have three constitutive concepts of God, and they are the following.

(1) The concept of God as the *original being* (*ens originarium*). In this concept I think of God as a thing in general which is not derived from anything else, as the only original being which is not derivative. Thus I represent God as completely isolated from everything, as existing for himself and from himself and as standing in community with no other being. This concept of an *entis originarii* is the foundation of cosmotheology. For it is from this concept that I infer the absolute necessity and highest perfection of God.

(2) The concept of God as the *highest being* (*ens summum*). In this concept I think of God as a being having every reality. It is from this concept of an *entis realissimi* and from its attributes that I derive its originality and absolute necessity. This concept of God as an *ente maximo* [greatest being] is the foundation of ontotheology.

(3) The concept of God as the *being of all beings* (*ens entium*). In this concept I think of God not only as the original being for itself which is derived from no other, but also as the highest ground of all other things, as the being from which everything else is derived. This we can call the *all-sufficiency* of God. These three concepts of God as the original being, the highest being, and the being of all beings are the foundation of everything else.

We will of course ascribe various other predicates to God in what follows. But these three are the only special determinations of the fundamental concept of God.

First Section: *Ontotheology*

[The *ens realissimum*]

In ontotheology we consider God as the *highest* being, or at least we make this concept our foundation. But how will I be able to think of a highest being through pure reason, *merely as a thing*? Every thing must have something positive which expresses some being in it. A mere not-being cannot constitute any thing. The concept *de ente omni modo negativo* [of a being in every way negative] is the concept of a *non entis*. Consequently, since each thing must have reality, we can represent every possible thing either as an *ens realissimum* or as an *ens partim reale, partim negativum*. But in the case of any thing which has only some reality, something is always still lacking, and hence it is not a complete thing. A highest thing, therefore, would have to be one which has all reality. For in this case alone do I have a thing whose thorough determination is bound up with its concept, because it is thoroughly and completely determined with respect to all possible *praedicatorum oppositorum* [opposed predicates]. Consequently the concept of an *entis realissimi* is the concept of an *entis summi*. For all things except this being are *partim realia, partim negativa* and thus their concepts are not thoroughly determinate. For example, the concept of a perfect human being as human does not determine whether this human being is old or young, tall or short, learned or unlearned. Hence such things are not complete things because they do not have all reality, but are instead mixed with negations.

But what are negations? They are nothing but limitations of realities. For no negation can be thought unless the positive has been thought previously. How could I think of a mere deficiency, of darkness without a concept of light, or poverty without a concept of prosperity? Thus if every negative concept is derived in that it always presupposes an *ens realissimum*

with respect to its realities and negations, because they are nothing but limitations of the highest reality. For when I wholly deny some realities which belong to an *entis realissimi*, there arise negations which give me the concept of an *entis partim realis, partim negativum* when I combine them with the remaining realities. Hence the concept of an *entis realissimi* contains simultaneously the ground for every other concept. Consequently it is the fundamental standard according to which I have to think or even judge all other things. Thus for instance I can think of something which does not know only if I have previously thought of a being who knows everything and then wholly canceled this reality.

From this it follows that the concept of an *entis realissimi* is at the same time the concept of an *entis originarii* from which all the concepts of other things are derived. But obviously this is only an *entis originarii logice talis* [a logically original being], a being whose concept cannot be derived from any other concept because all other concepts of things must be derived from it. Thus an *ens realissimum* is also an *ens logice originarium*. On the other hand, *omne ens limitatum* [every limited being] is also an *ens derivativum* [derivative being].

When Eberhard speaks of *mixed realities*, he is using an improper expression.¹ For a mixture of a reality and a negation, of something and nothing, cannot be thought. If I am to mix something with something else, I must have something actual. But negations are mere deficiencies. Hence if a thing has something negative along with what is real (for example, a darkened room, etc.) then in this case there is no mixing in of the negation, but rather a limitation of the reality. Thus in the case cited above I could not mix the negation darkness in with the light as something real. Rather, the negative darkness arose when I reduced and limited the reality light. But the *logical* mixture of concepts is something wholly different. Here I can cer-

1. "Realities are either pure or mixed. . . . The latter are realities which include negations in themselves. . . . In this case we have to separate the negative element from our concept if we are to retain something real" (Eberhard, *Vorberurteilung*, pp. 14–15). It seems clear that Eberhard's view is substantially the same as Kant's on this point. Kant's objection to the phrase "mixed reality" appears to be no more than a verbal quibble.

tainly say that the concept of a negation is mixed in with my concept of reality, for my concept of something negative is a concept every bit as much as my concept of something real is a concept. Hence here I have things which can be mixed with one another. But this is not the case with the objects themselves, it is only the case with my idea of the object.

More important than this is the proposition of those scholastic theologians who said that every attribute of God is in fact God himself. Expressed completely and precisely, the proposition is this: any single reality without limitation considered as a ground is at the same time my whole concept of God. If we examine this proposition, we find that it has an actual foundation. Every reality, if I think of it without limitation, is God himself. God is the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Eternal. In these cases I have only single realities without limits and I represent God wholly under each of them, because I think of each unlimited reality simultaneously as a ground from which I understand every other unlimited reality. For instance, when I represent omniscience, I regard it as a ground through which I posit omniscience, omnipotence, etc. And I infer with right that the being to which this single reality belongs without limitation is a being to which all the other realities also belong. And from this arises the concept of God. God is a necessary idea of our understanding, because he is the substratum of the possibility of all things. This point was already established above. But now the question is whether this idea of ours also has objective reality, that is, whether there actually exists a being corresponding to our idea of God. Some have wanted to prove this from the fact that in our concept there is nothing which contradicts it. Now this is obviously true, for our whole concept of God consists of realities. But it is impossible for one reality to contradict another, since a contradiction requires that something be and also not be. But this not-being would be a negation, and nothing of this kind can be thought in God. Yet the fact that there is nothing contradictory in my concept of God proves only the *logical possibility* of the concept, that is, the possibility of forming the concept in my understanding. For a self-contradictory concept is no concept at all.

But if I am to give objective reality to my concept and prove that there actually exists an object corresponding to my concept—more is surely required for this than the fact that there is nothing in my concept which contradicts itself. For how can a concept which is logically possible, merely in its logical possibility, constitute at the same time the real possibility of an object? For this, not only an analytic judgment is required, but also a synthetic one. That is, I must be able to know that the effects of the realities do not cancel one another. For instance, decisiveness and caution are both realities, but their effects are often of such a kind that one cancels the other. Now I have no capacity to judge *a priori* whether the realities combined in the concept of God cancel each other in their effects, and hence I cannot establish the possibility of my concept directly. But on the other hand, I may also be sure that no human being could ever prove its impossibility.

Let us now ask how we come to the concept of a maximum of all realities. The answer is this: insofar as the reality is finite, we must leave every limitation out of its concept if we want to apply it to the concept of a *realissimi*. For fundamentally we can only think of God by ascribing to him without any limitation everything real which we meet with in ourselves. But it is often very difficult to separate out every limitation, because we ourselves are limited creatures and are often unable to represent the real except under limitations. In such a case, where we are not in a position to remove all the limitations from our concept, we still do not need to give up the reality itself; rather we can say that we do ascribe it to God, only without any limitations, because in fact something real is its foundation. Thus for example it is very difficult for us to think of eternity without any limitations. But we must nevertheless have it in our concept of God, because it is a reality. So we ascribe it to God and admit the inability of our reason to think it in a wholly pure way.

As for God's understanding, we must think of it as intuitive, as opposed to our discursive understanding, which is able to form concepts of things only from universal characteristics. But this is a limitation which must be left out of the reality of under-

standing if I am to apply this reality to God. Hence God's understanding will not be a faculty of thinking but a faculty of intuiting.

The concept of the infinite is taken from mathematics, and belongs only to it.² For this concept never determines an absolute magnitude. On the contrary, it always determines only a relative one. It is the concept of a magnitude which in relation to its measure as unity is greater than any number. Hence infinity never determines how great something is. For it does not determine the standard (or unity) and a great deal depends on this in fact. For example, if I represent space as infinite, I can assume either miles or diameters of the earth as the standard or unity with respect to which it is infinite. If I assume miles as the standard, then I can say that universal space is greater than any number of miles, even if I think of centillions of them. But if I assume diameters of the earth as my standard, or even distances to the sun. I will still be able to say here that universal space is greater than any number, in this case, of diameters of the earth and distances to the sun, even if I think of centillions of them. But who does not see that in the last case the infinity is greater than in the first, because here the unity with respect to which universal space is greater than any number is much greater than it was before? But from this we also see that the concept of infinity only expresses a relation to our incapacity to determine the concept of magnitude, because the magnitude in question is greater than every number I can think of, and hence gives me no determinate concept of the magnitude itself. Thus when I call an object infinite the only advantage this gives me is that I gain an insight into my inability to express the magnitude of this object in numbers. I may be very impressed and astonished at the object in this way, but on the other hand, I can never come

2. Eberhard (*Vorberingung*, pp. 15–17) claims that God is both mathematically (indeterminately) infinite and metaphysically (determinately) infinite. In the following two paragraphs, Kant subjects these claims to criticism. His objection to calling God "mathematically infinite" was in fact derived from Leibniz. But Eberhard's notion of "metaphysical infinity" would seem to be nothing but the traditional rationalist conception of a "reality" or "perfection," to which Kant wholeheartedly subscribed. And in fact Kant himself continues to call God "infinite" in this sense.

to know the absolute magnitude of the object by means of it. Thus the concept of infinity can have a great deal of aesthetic beauty on account of its ability to move me deeply. But it does not help me at all to say with precision how great the object itself is. Moreover, if I am to assume an object to be infinite, I must always assume that it is homogeneous with something else. For instance if I call the divine understanding infinite I must assume my understanding as a standard of unity, and then admit that the magnitude of the divine understanding is greater than everything I can think of as an understanding. But this does not help me in the least to be able to say determinately how great the divine understanding is. Thus we see that I cannot come a single step further in my knowledge of God by applying the concept of mathematical infinity to him. For through this concept I only learn that I can never express the concept of God's greatness in numbers. But this gives me no insight into God's absolute greatness. I cannot even find any measure for it. For where is there a unity which is homogeneous with God?

Might we perhaps succeed in finding this measure by means of the concept of metaphysical infinity? But what is the meaning of "metaphysical infinity?" In this concept we understand perceptions in their highest degree, or better yet, without any degree. The *omnitudo realitatis* [All of reality] is what is called metaphysical infinity. Now it is true that through this concept we do gain a precise concept of God's greatness. For this total reality does determine only his absolute greatness. But here I need no homogeneous measure, no unity to be compared with God in order to bring out his greatness relative to it. Rather, I have here a determinate concept of this greatness itself. For I see that everything which is truly a reality is to be met with in him. But the concept of totality is always wholly precise, and I can never think of it as more or less than it is. On the other hand, I cannot see why I ought to express an ontological concept (the concept of totality) in terms of mathematical infinity. Should I not use a term congruent with the concepts of this science, instead of permitting an ambiguity by usurping an expression from another science, thus running the risks of letting an alien concept creep in as well? Hence in theology we can easily dispense with the

term *metaphysical infinity*. The ontological concept expressed is not suitably rendered by a term of mathematical origin, and would be better signified by the term *All of reality*. But if we want a special term for this concept, we would do better to choose the expression *all-sufficiency* (*omnisufficientia*). This expression represents everything real in God to us as a ground (*ens entium*), because *sufficientia* always expresses the relation of a ground to its consequences. We would also do better to be satisfied with the pure concept of our reason, *omnitudo realitatis*. For this concept is the fundamental measure by which I can determine the absolute greatness of God.

Above we have already firmly established the universal concept of God as an *ens realissimum*. This is the ideal our reason needs as a higher standard for what is less complete. And we have seen further that this concept of a most perfect being has to be at the same time the concept of a highest being. Now the question is: Which predicates will we ascribe to this being, and in what way must we proceed in arranging these predicates of God so that they do not contradict the concept of a being which is the most primary of all? At this point we still have to do only with mere concepts, and we are not troubling ourselves as yet with whether these concepts actually correspond to an object. We have thought of a being as the substratum of the possibility of all other beings, and now we are asking how this ideal must be constituted. Hence we want to see which predicates can agree with the concept of this highest and most perfect being. This investigation is most necessary, since otherwise the whole concept is of no help to us, and cannot in general be rightly thought by us unless we determine the predicates which are congruent to it. But this investigation will also be of great utility to us in that it teaches us to know God as far as human reason is capable of this knowledge. It gives us convenient rules as to how we are to speak of God, and what we are to say of him. And it will recommend caution and care to us, so that nothing creeps into our concept of God which is contrary to his highest reality.

What predicates, then, can be thought in an *ente realissimo*? What are its attributes? We have already seen that nothing can be predicated of the concept of an *entis realissimi* except realities.

But where will we find these realities? What are they? And how can we (and how must we) ascribe them to God? Every reality is either given me through pure reason independently of any experience, or met with by me in the world of sense. I may ascribe the first kind of reality to God without hesitation, for realities of this kind apply to things in general and determine them through pure understanding. Here no experience is involved and the realities are not even affected by sensibility. Hence if I predicate them of God I need not fear that I am confusing him with an object of sense. For in this case I am only ascribing to him what is true of him as a thing in general. It lies already in my concept of him as an *ente realissimo* that he must be a thing, and therefore I have to ascribe to him every reality which can be predicated of him as a thing. Now since these a priori realities refer to the universal attributes of a thing in general, they are called *ontological* predicates. They are purely transcendental concepts. To this class of realities belong God's possibility, his existence, his necessity, or whatever kind of existence flows from his concept; also the concept of substance, the concept of unity of substance, simplicity, infinity, duration, presence, and others as well. But all these concepts determine only the concept of a *thing in general*. They are only predicates in *abstracto* which the deist ascribes to God. It is impossible for us to be satisfied with them alone, for such a God would be of no help to us. He would be only a thing, wholly isolated and for itself, standing in no relation to us. This concept of God must certainly constitute the beginning of all our knowledge of God, but it is useless when taken only for itself, and it would be quite dispensable for us if we could not know more of God than this. If this concept of God is to be of use to us, we will have to see if these ontological predicates cannot be applied to examples in *concreto*. The theist does this when he thinks of God as the *supreme intelligence*. If we are to ascribe predicates to God in *concreto*, we will have to take the materials for the concept of God from empirical principles and empirical knowledge. But in the whole of our experience we find nothing which has more reality than *our own soul*. Its realities thus have to be taken from our knowledge of ourselves. They will be psychological predicates

which can be ascribed to God along with his ontological predicates. But since all these predicates are borrowed from experience, and since in the whole of experience we meet with nothing but phenomena, at this point we must exercise great care so that we do not let ourselves be blinded by a mere show and ascribe predicates to God which can only be true of objects of sense. Hence we must note the following rules of caution:

(1) Regarding the choice of the predicates themselves: What kinds of predicates shall we take from experience so as to be able to unite them with the concept of God? Nothing but pure realities. But in the whole world there is no thing which has *pure* reality. Rather, every thing which can be given us through experience is a *partim reale, partim negativum*. Hence great difficulties arise at this point, because many of my concepts are associated with determinations which have some deficiency in them. But such negations cannot be ascribed to God. Hence I must first proceed *via negationis* [by the way of negation].³ That is, I must carefully separate out everything sensible inhering in my representation of this or that reality, and leave out everything imperfect and negative. Then I must ascribe to God the pure reality which is left over. But this is extremely difficult, for often very little or nothing at all is left over after I reject the limitations. Or at least I can never think of the pure positive without the sensible element which is woven into my representation of it. In a case like this I have to say that if I do ascribe this or that *realitas phaenomenon* [phenomenal reality] to God, I do it only insofar as all limitations have been separated from it. But if the negative element cannot be separated without canceling the concept at the same time, then in this case I will not be able to predicate the concept of God at all. Thus, for instance, I cannot ascribe extension to God as a predicate, because it is only a concept of sense, and if I separate everything negative from it, nothing real at all is left over. Similarly, after I remove everything negative and sensible from the concept of matter, I retain nothing but the con-

3. Both Kant's texts speak of the *via negationis*. Cf. Eberhard, *Vorbereitung*, p. 26, and Baumgarten, *Metaphysica* (Halle, 1963), §826.

cept of an externally active power. And in the case of the concept of spatial presence, if I leave out the condition of sense (i.e. space), nothing but the pure reality of presence is left over. From these concepts, therefore, I will be able to apply to God only the realities themselves, power and presence.

In this way I will be able to determine the quality of divine predicates *via negationis*. That is, I can determine which predicates drawn from experience can be applied to my concept of God after all negations have been separated from them. But in this way I cannot come to know the quantity of the reality in God. On the contrary, the reality remaining in my concepts after all the limitations have been left out will be quite insignificant and small in degree. Hence if I meet with any reality in any of the attributes of things given to me through experience, I must ascribe this reality to God in the highest degree and with infinite significance. This is called proceeding *per viam eminentiae* [by the way of eminence].⁴ But I cannot proceed in this way unless I have first brought out the pure reality *via negationis*. But if I have neglected this task and have not carefully separated everything negative from my concept, then my concept of God will be wholly corrupt if I predicate the concept of this reality as it is met with in appearance. It is from this that anthropomorphism arises.

Hence first the limits must be left out and only the pure reality which is left over must be ascribed to God. But it must be ascribed *via eminentiae*. For instance, not merely power, but *infinite* power must be ascribed to God, and not merely an understanding, but an *infinite* understanding. But we can never arrive fully at the attributes of God, so as to be able to know how they are constituted in themselves. For instance, if we take the human understanding, it is not enough to magnify it infinitely *via eminentiae*. For it would still remain a limited understanding and would grow in the quickness of its knowledge. Rather, we must first have left out all the limits inhering in it as an understanding that can only know things *discursively*. But since the pure reality

4. Cf. Eberhard, *Vorbereitung*, p. 26, and Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §826.

which is then left over (i.e. understanding) cannot in general be comprehended by us at all, there is only one path still left open to us.

(2) Regarding the *way of proceeding* in ascribing to God those realities abstracted from concepts of sense: This is the noble way of *analogy*. But what does this proceeding *per analogiam* consist in? Analogy does not consist in an imperfect similarity of things to one another, as it is commonly taken. For in this case that would be something very uncertain. Not only would we have bad predicates, because we would not be in a position to think of the reality itself without any limitations, but we could only ascribe these not wholly purified realities to God insofar as he had something perfectly similar to them in himself. But how would that help me? Could it give me a sufficiently complete concept of God? If, however, we assume analogy to be the perfect similarity of relations (not of things, but of relations) or, in short, what the mathematicians understand as *proportion*, then we will be satisfied at once. We can then form a concept of God and of his predicates which will be so sufficient that we will never need anything more. But obviously we will not assume any relations of magnitude (for this belongs to mathematics). Rather, we will assume a relation of cause and effect, or even better, of ground and consequence, so that we are able to argue in a wholly philosophical manner.⁵ For just as in the world one thing is regarded as the cause of another thing when it contains the ground for this thing, so in the same way, we regard the whole world as a consequence of its ground *in God*, and argue from the analogy. For instance, just as the happiness of one man (the canceling of his misery) is related to the benevolence of another, so in just the same way the happiness of all men is related to the benevolence of God.

[The Possibility of an *entis realissimi*]

The first ground of proof for the existence of God is the ontological one, from pure concepts. But the real possibility of a most

5. Kant's preference for the ground/consequence relation over the cause/effect relation is probably a critical reflection on Eberhard's discussion of the "way of causality" (*via causalitatis*) (Eberhard, *Vorbereitung*, p. 26). Kant rejects

perfect being must be proven before I can prove its existence in this way.⁶ For the dogmatic atheist absolutely denies the possibility of a God, and asserts that there is no God. But here, where we have to do only with pure reason, denying the existence of an *entis realissimi* and denying its possibility are fundamentally the same thing. Hence if the dogmatic atheist denies that there is a God, he takes upon himself the obligation to prove that God is impossible. For all our a priori knowledge is of such a kind that when I presume to prove from pure reason that something does not exist, I can only do it by proving that it is impossible for this thing to exist. The reason for this is that since here I can borrow no proof from experience either for or against the existence of a being, it follows that I have no other path before me but to prove from the mere concept of the thing that it does not exist, and that means proving that the thing contradicts itself. Hence before he presumes the right to assert that no *ens realissimum* exists, the dogmatic atheist must show that an object corresponding to our idea of such a being would contradict itself in the unification of its predicates. On the other hand, if it occurs to us to want to demonstrate a priori that God does exist, then we too must undertake the duty to prove through pure reason and with apodictic certainty that God is possible. But there is no way we can do this except by proving that an *ens realissimum* does not contradict itself in the synthesis of all its predicates. But in his proof for the possibility of an *entis realissimi* Leibniz confused the possibility of this concept with the possibility of the thing itself. He argued as follows: In my concept of an *ente realissimo* there is no contradiction, because one reality cannot contain it as employing an empirical concept (causality) where a pure concept of the understanding (ground and consequence) would be appropriate.

6. Duns Scotus was the first to maintain that the ontological argument depends on the assumption that the concept of God involves no contradiction. And Scotus rejected the argument because he held this assumption to be unprovable. (Duns Scotus, *Commentaria Oxoniensis*. Quaracchi, 1912-14, 1, 2, 2, no. 32). Leibniz accepted the challenge, and offered a proof that the concept of God is necessarily free of contradiction (Leibniz, *Philosophischen Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, vol. 7, pp. 261-262. Cf. Loemker, ed., Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters* [Dordrecht, 1969], p. 167). Kant accepts Leibniz's proof, but insists that it demonstrates only the logical possibility of a perfect being and not its real possibility.

tradict another. For a contradiction necessarily requires a negation in order for me to say that something both is and is not. But where there are only sheer realities, there is no negation and hence no contradiction either. But if there is no contradiction in the concept of an *ente realissimo*, then such a thing is possible. Leibniz should have concluded, however, only that my idea of such a thing is possible. For the fact that there is nothing contradictory in my concept of a thing does prove that it is the concept of something possible, but it does not yet prove the possibility of the object of my idea. The principle of contradiction is only the analytic principle of possibility, by means of which it is established with apodictic certainty whether my concept is possible or impossible. But it is not the synthetic principle of possibility, and by means of it we cannot prove at all whether or not the predicates of a thing would cancel each other in the thing itself. For I cannot come to know the synthesis of predicates in the object by means of the principle of contradiction. This knowledge would have to come rather from an insight into the constitution and range of each predicate as regards its operations. Hence if I undertake to prove the possibility of an *ente realissimum* (that is, to prove the possibility of the synthesis of all predicates in one object), then I presume to prove a priori through my reason and with apodictic certainty that all perfections can be united in a single stem and derived from a single principle. But such a proof transcends the possible insight of all human reason. For where will I get this knowledge? From the world? All right, but in the world I will find realities only as they are dispersed among objects. For example, one person has a great capacity for understanding, but is somewhat indecisive; another has very lively affections but only an average amount of insight. In animals I note an astonishing fertility in propagation, but no reason; in man I find reason but much less fertility. In short, I see in these cases that where one reality is found, some other reality is not present. Now obviously I cannot infer from them that the one reality cancels the other, and conclude for instance that it is impossible for there to be a man who unites in himself every reality a man can have. But on the other hand, I also have no insight as to how such a perfect human being could be pos-

sible. For I cannot know whether in the synthesis (the composition) of all human realities the effects of one perfection would contradict the effects of another. In order to have this insight I would have to know all the possible effects of these single realities. But I do not perceive all their possible effects in a synthesis of all human realities. Applying this to God, I must all the more admit my inability to see how a synthesis of all possible realities could be possible as regards their effects. For how can my reason presume to know how all the highest realities operate, what effects would arise from them, and what sort of relation all these realities would have to each other? But I would have to be able to know this if I wanted to see whether or not all realities could be united together in one object. And only this would show me whether God is possible.

On the other hand, however, it is also impossible for human reason ever to prove that such a combination of all perfections in one thing is *not* possible. For this would also require an insight into the range of the effects of the total reality. Hence the same grounds which put before our eyes the inability of human reason to assert the existence of such a being are also necessary and sufficient to prove that no counterassertion of God's nonexistence can be made either.

In short, it is impossible to prove that God is impossible. On the contrary, reason does not put the least obstacle in the way of my assuming the possibility of a God, if I should feel bound to do so in some other way. Reason itself is not able to prove with apodictic certainty that God is possible (and a priori proofs must one and all have apodictic certainty, otherwise they are not proofs). For this would require an insight which far transcends the bounds of the human faculty of reason. But from this same inability of my reason follows the impossibility ever of proving that a most perfect being is not possible. Hence the edifice of the dogmatic atheist falls to the ground. For if he wishes to deny God's existence and assert that there absolutely is no God, the atheist must first demonstrate the impossibility of God. But here reason forsakes him, and everything he may bring against the possibility of God will be only so much absurdity and nonsense. From all this we see that human reason can prove neither the

possibility nor the impossibility of God, because it lacks the necessary insight into the range and effects of all realities. But nothing prevents us from assuming the possibility of God, if we should be able to find convincing grounds for it in some other way.

Now just as we can refute the dogmatic atheist and reject his presumptuous assertions of the nonexistence of God before we ourselves have proven that God exists, so in the same way we can also render fruitless all the assaults of the skeptical atheist without previously giving a proof for the existence of a most perfect being. For since he knows that speculative reason cannot prove the existence of God to our satisfaction, the skeptical atheist doubts that any sort of proof for it can be found, and so he also doubts God's existence itself. The skeptical atheist can be refuted only if, granting him the insufficiency of all speculative proofs for the existence of God as an *entis realissimi*, we nonetheless feel an inner conviction on *practical* grounds that a God *must* exist. We must assume there is a God and we must believe in him, even though our reason may not venture to assume his possibility and his existence *a priori*.

[The A Priori Proofs]

The ontological proof for the existence of a God is taken from the concept of an *entis realissimi*. The argument is this: An *ens realissimum* is something which contains all realities in itself. But existence is also a reality. Hence the *ens realissimum* must necessarily exist. Thus if someone were to assert that God does not exist, he would be negating in the predicate something which is included in the subject, and this would be a contradiction. The great simplicity of this proof by itself provokes suspicion; and the suspicion is not unfounded. But we will let the critique of the proof take its course, and see whether the proof holds water.

In this proof, everything unquestionably depends on whether the existence of a thing is in fact one of its realities. But the fact that a thing exists does not by itself make the thing more perfect. By existing, the thing does not contain any new predicate. Rather it is only posited with all its predicates. The thing was already just as complete in my concept when I thought of it as

possible, as it is afterward when it actually exists. For otherwise, if existence were a special reality belonging to the thing, it would not be the same thing I had thought before, but more would exist in it than was included in the concept of the object. *Being* is thus obviously not a real predicate, that is, the concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing in order to make it still more perfect. It is only the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, in themselves. In its logical employment, it is merely the copula of a judgment. The proposition *God is omnipotent* contains only two concepts which have objects, God and omnipotence. The little word *is* is not a further predicate, but is only that which posits the predicate (omnipotent) in relation to the subject (God). If I now take the subject (God) together with all its predicates (including omnipotence) and say *God exists* or *There is a God*, I do not add any new predicate to the concept of God. Rather I only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and the object in relation to my concept. Both the object and the concept must have the same content, and thus nothing can be added to the concept (which expresses mere possibility) by simply thinking its object as given (through the expression *it is*). Hence the actual contains no more than the merely possible. For example, one hundred actual dollars do not contain the least bit more than one hundred possible dollars. For the possible dollars signify the concept, and the actual ones, the object of this concept and the positing of it as such. Hence in a case where the object contained more than the concept, my concept would not express the whole object, and thus would not be the concept appropriate to it. The object in its actuality is not contained analytically in my concept, but is added synthetically to my concept (which is a determination of my state). But this additional *being* external to my concept does not in the least increase the hundred dollars I am thinking of. Whatever our concept of an object may contain and however much it may contain, we must still go beyond it if we are to impart existence to the object. If I think in a thing every reality except one, the missing reality is not added if I say that this defective thing exists. On the contrary, it exists with precisely the same deficiency I have thought in it, for otherwise what

exists would be something different from what I was thinking of. Now if I think of some being as the highest reality (without deficiency), it is still an open question whether it exists or not.⁷ For it is just as thoroughly determined as an ideal as it would be if it were an actual object. From this we see how rash it would be to conclude that existence is comprehended in all reality, and hence that existence is included already in the concept of a possible thing. And thus collapses every argument which says that existence follows necessarily from the concept of an *entis realissimi*.

The cosmological proof retains the connection of absolute necessity and the highest reality. But instead of inferring necessary existence from supreme reality, it infers from an already given unconditional necessity of some being to its unbounded reality. Leibniz, and later Wolff, called this the proof a *contingentia mundi* [from the contingency of the world]. It says that if something exists, then an absolutely necessary being must also exist. But at the very least, I myself exist. Therefore, an absolutely necessary being exists. The minor premise of this argument contains an experience, and the major premise contains an inference from experience. This inference rests on the natural law of causality, which says that everything contingent has a cause. This cause, if it is also contingent, must once again have a cause, and so on. This series of things subordinated one to another has to end in an absolutely necessary cause, since otherwise it would not be complete. For a *regressus in infinitum*, a series of effects without a supreme cause, is absurd. Everything which exists can only exist in one of two ways, either *contingently* or *necessarily*. Whatever is contingent must have some cause for its existing as it does and not otherwise. But I myself (and even the world in general) exist contingently. Hence an absolutely necessary being must also exist, in order to be the cause of my being as I am and not otherwise. Thus the proof really does begin from an experience, and so it is not carried out in a wholly a priori manner, or ontologically. And it is called the *cosmological* proof because the object of any possible experience is called a

7. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A598-600/B626-628.

world. But since it abstracts from every particular attribute which distinguishes this world from any other possible world and founds itself only on a world in general without regard to its constitution, the cosmological proof is distinguished in its denomination from the physicotheological proof, which makes use of observations about the particular constitution of the sensible world as grounds of proof. But the cosmological proof argues further from the existence of an absolutely necessary being to the conclusion that this being must also be an *ens realissimum*. This argument runs as follows. A necessary being can only be determined in one way: that is, with respect to all possible *praedicatorum contradictorie oppositorum* [contradictorily opposed predicates] it must be determined by one of these opposed predicates. Consequently, it must be thoroughly determined by its concept. But there is only one possible concept of a thing which determines it thoroughly a priori, and this is the concept of the *entis realissimi*. For in every possible pair of *praedictatis contradictorie oppositis*, only the reality always belongs to it. Hence the concept of a most real being is the only concept by means of which a necessary being can be thought. Or in other words, there exists an *ens realissimum* and it exists necessarily.⁸

The cosmological proof bases itself on experience and gives itself the appearance of arriving step by step at the existence of a necessary being in general. But the empirical concept can teach us nothing about the attributes of this being. On the contrary, at this point reason says goodbye to experience and searches only among concepts. For if I ask what attributes a necessary being must have, the answer can only be: those attributes from which its absolute necessity flows. But reason believes that the requisites needed for absolute necessity are met with solely in the concept of a most real being. So it concludes that the absolutely necessary being is the most real being. But how could reason conclude this if it had not already *presupposed* that the concept of a being of the highest reality is fully adequate to the concept of absolute necessity? This proposition, which was asserted in the ontological argument, is thus assumed in the cos-

8. *Ibid.*, A605f/B633f.

mological and made the ground for its proof, even though it was supposed to be denied.

But since the absolutely necessary existence of a highest reality could not be successfully proven from the concept to which this object corresponds, it will also be impossible conversely to demonstrate successfully the supreme reality of a thing from its absolute necessity. For absolute necessity is an existence from mere concepts. If I say that the concept of an *entis realissimi* is a concept of this kind and in fact the only concept fitting and adequate to necessary existence, then I must also admit that existence can be inferred from the concept of a most real being. Thus really only the ontological proof from mere concepts is contained in the so-called cosmological power of proof, and the supposed experience is wholly superfluous. It serves, perhaps, to lead us to the concept of absolute necessity, but not to establish this concept as pertaining to any determinate thing. For as soon as this is our intention, we must immediately leave all experience behind and seek among pure concepts for those which contain the possibility of an absolutely necessary being. If it were correct that every absolutely necessary being is also a most real being, then it would also be possible to convert the proposition, as can be done with every affirmative judgment, and to say that every most real being is a necessary being. Now since this proposition is determined a priori from mere concepts, the mere concept of an *entis realissimi* must carry its own absolute necessity along with it. This is asserted by the ontological proof, but the cosmological proof does not want to recognize it, even though it secretly underlies the inferences made in this proof.

[Necessary Existence]

But what sort of concept do we have of an absolutely necessary being or thing? In all ages men have spoken of an absolutely necessary being, but they have not taken the trouble to understand whether and how they could think of such a thing at all. Instead, they have straightway tried to prove its existence. An explanation of the name of this concept is quite easy to give; it is something whose nonexistence is impossible. But this explanation makes us none the wiser as to the conditions which

might make it impossible for this thing not to be.⁹ For the human understanding cannot grasp how the nonexistence of a thing might be impossible,¹⁰ since it has a concept of impossibility only through the principle of contradiction. For every contradiction, two parts are required; a single thing cannot contradict itself. Hence there can never be a contradiction in the nonexistence of a thing, consequently there is no contradiction in the nonexistence of an *entis realissimi*. In his explanation of the absolute necessity of the *entis realissimi*, Wolff¹¹ used as an example the fact that it is absolutely necessary that a triangle should have three angles. But the absolute necessity of this judgment is only a conditioned necessity of the matter or predicate in the judgment. The proposition in question does not say that three angles necessarily exist, but rather that under the condition that a triangle exists (is given), three angles necessarily exist along with it. If in an ideal judgment I cancel the predicate and retain the subject, a contradiction results. For instance, to posit a triangle and cancel its three angles is contradictory. Thus I say that this predicate belongs necessarily to the subject. But if I cancel the subject together with the predicate, no contradiction results. For nothing is left which could be contradicted. Thus, for example, there is no contradiction in canceling the triangle together with its three angles. And this has direct application to the concept of an absolutely necessary being. If I cancel its existence, I cancel the thing itself with all its predicates. So where can the contradiction come from? There is nothing external to it which could be contradicted, for the thing is not supposed to be externally necessary. But there is also no internal contradiction, for by canceling the thing itself I have at the same time canceled everything internal to it.

9. Ibid., A592-596/B621-624.

10. Pölitiz's text reads *möglich*. I presume this is an error, and Kant means *unmöglich*.

11. I am unable to locate any passage in Wolff where this illustration is employed, but of course it is employed by Descartes in connection with his proof for God's existence in *Meditations* V. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that it is Descartes and not Wolff who is meant here, though it is impossible to say whether the error should be attributed to Pölitiz, to Kant's transcriber, or to Kant himself.

For instance: *God is omnipotent*. This is a necessary judgment. Omnipotence cannot be canceled as long as I posit a Deity with whose concept this predicate is identical. Here I have logically unconditioned necessity. But now what would an absolute real necessity have to be? It would have to consist in its being absolutely necessary that God must exist. But if I say that God does not exist, then neither omnipotence nor any other of his predicates is given. For they are all canceled along with the object, and this thought does not exhibit the least contradiction. An internal contradiction can never arise from my canceling the predicate of a judgment along with the object, no matter what the predicate may be. Thus I cannot form the least concept of a thing which would leave a contradiction behind if it were canceled along with all its predicates. But apart from contradictions I have no mark of impossibility merely through pure concepts a priori. Hence in this case it is possible that God does not exist. It costs speculative reason nothing at all to cancel God's existence in thought. The whole task of the transcendental ideal depends on either finding a concept for absolute necessity or on finding absolute necessity in the concept of some thing. If we can do the one, we must be able to do the other as well. For reason knows absolute necessity only in what is necessary from its concept. But both tasks wholly transcend every effort of our understanding to satisfy itself over this point; yet at the same time they transcend every attempt to rest content with our incapacity. This absolute necessity which we need indispensably as a final ground for all things is the true abyss for human reason.¹² Even eternity, as described in its dreadful sublimity by a Haller, does not make so dizzying an impression on the mind.¹³ For eternity

12. Ground = *Grund*. Abyss = *Abgrund*.

13. Victor Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), Swiss anatomist and physiologist, was also a poet and novelist of some fame. The allusion is to Haller's *Unvollkommenes Gedicht über Ewigkeit* (Unfinished Poem on Eternity) (1736). In his 1794 essay "The End of All Things," Kant quotes the following lines from the poem: "Ihn aber hält am ernststen Orte, / Der nichts zurücke lässt, / Die Ewigkeit mit starken Armen fest." ("But in that earnest place, / Him who leaves nothing behind, / Eternity holds fast in its strong arms.") *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, p. 327. (Cf. *Kant on History*, L. W. Beck, ed. [Indianapolis, 1963], p. 69.) Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A613/B641, and *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 151.

only *lacks* the duration of things; it does not *support* this duration. We can neither resist nor tolerate the thought of a being which we represent as the highest of all possible things, and which may say to itself, "I am from eternity to eternity, and outside me there is nothing except what exists through my will. But whence am I?" This thought pulls the ground from beneath us, and the greatest perfection as much as the smallest hovers without support before speculative reason. But it costs reason nothing to let both of them disappear, nor is there the least obstacle to this. In short, an absolutely necessary thing will remain to all eternity an insoluble problem for human reason.

Up to this point we have followed Eberhard's *Vorbereitung zur natürlichen Theologie* [*Propaedeutic to Natural Theology*]. But now he proceeds immediately to the physicotheological proof, and it seems to us more systematic not to pursue this subject quite yet. Instead, now that we have treated the concept of a highest being and the proof for the existence of this being from pure reason, we will proceed to the *ontological predicates* of this being, and we will treat of them in their connection with transcendental theology. The first consideration here is the *possibility* of God, which no one can either deny or prove, because such knowledge transcends all human reason. As was shown above, the objective reality of the synthesis which generates this concept rests on principles of possible experience. (And by *experience* we understand the sum total of all the objects of sense.) But how am I going to have a priori insight into the possibility of this thing without being able to perceive the synthesis of its predicates? As long as my concept does not contradict itself, it is possible. But this analytic principle (the principle of contradiction) is only the *logical* characteristic of possibility, by means of which an object can be distinguished from a *nihil negativo* [negative nothing]. But how can I straightforwardly infer the possibility of a thing (real possibility) from the possibility of a concept (logical possibility)?

Let us now go on to the proof that the *ens realissimum* must also be the *ens entium*; or, as we expressed it earlier, that the most perfect being must contain in itself the ground of the possibility of all other things. We have already established this

through the fact that everything which is a *partim reale*, *partim negativum* presupposes a being containing all realities in itself and constituting these things through a limitation of its realities. For otherwise we could not think where either the realities or the negations in things come from, because even a negation always presupposes some reality and arises through the limitation of this reality. On this point rests the only possible ground of proof for my demonstration of God's existence, which was discussed in detail in an essay I published some years ago.¹⁴ Here it was shown that of all possible proofs, the one which affords us the most satisfaction is the argument that if we cancel an original being, we cancel at the same time the substratum of the possibility of all things. But even this proof is not apodictically certain. For it is unable to establish the objective necessity of an original being; rather it establishes only the subjective necessity of assuming such a being. But this proof can in no way be refuted, because it has its ground in the nature of human reason. For my reason makes it absolutely necessary for me to assume a being which is the ground of everything possible, because otherwise I would be unable to know what in general the possibility of something consists in.

Now since the highest being is also the original being from which the essence of all things is derived, it follows that the order, beauty, harmony, and unity which are met with in things are not always contingent, but inhere necessarily in their essence. For instance, we find that our earth is flattened at the poles but elevated between the tropics and the equator.¹⁵ And this follows from the necessity of its nature, that is, from the equilibrium of the fluid masses of which the earth was once composed. Hence Newton could prove the shape of the earth reliably a priori and prior to experience, before the astronomers had measured its elevation at the equator merely given the fact that it once was in a fluid state. Moreover, this oblateness of the

14. *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (The Only Possible Ground of Proof for a Demonstration of God's Existence) (1763), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 63–204.

15. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A637/6715.

spherical earth is of great advantage, since only it prevents the projections of solid earth (or even smaller mountains perhaps raised by earthquakes) from continuously displacing the earth's axis, perhaps even to a noticeable degree over a long period of time. For the rotation of the earth at the equator is, so to speak, such a mighty mountain that the vibration of all the other mountains will never noticeably alter the earth's position in relation to its axis, or even be able to alter it. But wise as this arrangement is, I may not account for it as a contingent act of the divine will. For, as we have just actually established, it must be regarded as necessary to the nature of the earth. Yet this takes nothing away from God's majesty as creator of the world. For since he is the original being from whose essence the nature of all things is derived, the necessity of this natural arrangement is also derived from his essence. But it is not derived from his will, since in that case he would only be the world's architect, and not its creator. Only what is contingent in things can be derived from the divine will and its arbitrary directives. But everything contingent is contained in the form of things; consequently, only the form of things can be derived from the divine will. To say this is not to make things themselves independent of God, nor is it to withdraw them in any way from his highest supreme power. For by regarding God as the *ens originarium* containing in itself the ground of all possible things, we derive the matter of things from the divine essence, since this matter consists in realities. Thus we make the essence of things themselves derivative from God, that is, from his essence. For it is unthinkable that a special divine volition could be necessary to produce certain effects in a thing which follow necessarily from its nature. For instance, how could a special divine volition be necessary to give a spheroid shape to a fluid body revolving on its axis? For this is a necessary effect of the body's own nature. If we wanted to derive everything from the divine will, we would have to make everything inhering necessarily in the nature of things independent of God. We would have to recognize a creator only for what is contingent, that is, only for the *form* of things, and not for their matter or for what belongs necessarily to the things

themselves. Hence if the laws and arrangements in nature which flow from the essence of things themselves are to be dependent on God (and they must be dependent on him, since otherwise we would be unable to find any ground for their possibility), then they can only be derived from his original essence.

From everything which has been brought forth thus far from pure reason in favor of God's existence, we see that we are justified in assuming and presupposing an *ens originarium* which is at the same time an *ens realissimum* as a necessary transcendental hypothesis. For to cancel a being which contains the data for everything possible is to cancel all possibility. And therefore a most real original being is a necessary presupposition, on account of its relationship to the possibility of all things. For in addition to the logical concept of the necessity of a thing (where something is said to be absolutely necessary if its nonexistence would be a contradiction, and consequently impossible), we have yet another rational concept of real necessity. This is where a thing is *eo ipso* necessary if its nonexistence would cancel all possibility. Of course in the logical sense possibility always precludes actuality, and here I can think the possibility of a thing without actuality. Only we have no concept of real possibility except through existence, and in the case of every possibility which we think *realiter* we always presuppose some existence; if not the actuality of the thing itself, then at least an actuality in general containing the data for everything possible. Hence every possibility presupposes something actually given. For if everything were merely possible, then the possible itself would have no ground. Consequently this ground of possibility must itself be given not merely as possible, but also as actual.

But it must be noted that this proof only establishes the subjective necessity of such a being. That is, our speculative reason sees that it is necessary to presuppose this being if it wants to have insight into *why* something is possible. But the objective necessity of such a thing can by no means be demonstrated in this manner. For here reason must come to know its weakness, its inability to soar above the bounds of all possible experience. And insofar as it does presume to continue its flight beyond these bounds, it only falls into whirlpools and turbulent waters,

plunging it into a bottomless abyss where it is wholly swallowed up.

Hence the totality of what speculative reason can teach us concerning the existence of God consists in showing us how we must necessarily hypothesize this existence. But speculative reason does not show us how God's existence could be demonstrated with apodictic certainty. Even this much is quite fortunate for us, since it removes every obstacle which might stand in the way of our assuming a being of all beings. Indeed, if we can be convinced of such a being in some other way, we can believe in it firmly and unshakably. For even in the speculative use of reason, the highest being remains an ideal free from faults, anchoring and crowning the whole of human knowledge.

[God's Ontological Attributes]

According to Baumgarten, all the attributes of God are either *quiescentes* [at rest] or *operativae* [active].¹⁶ *Perfectiones quiescentes* are those in which we think of an action which can be represented without a *nota actionis* [mark of activity]. *Operatives*, on the other hand, cannot be thought without some characteristic of an activity. Let us first consider God's *perfectiones quiescentes*, since his ontological predicates belong to them. In addition to God's possibility and actuality, which we have already treated as far as reason can teach us about them, we further maintain that God is a *substance*. This predicate belongs to God merely as a thing, since all things are substances. A substance is understood to be a reality existing merely for itself, without being a determination of any other thing. A substance is opposed to an accident, which can only exist by inhering in another thing. *Accidentia* are therefore not particular things, but only different ways or *modi* of the existence of a substance. But God is a thing for itself and *eo ipso* a substance. If we wanted to dispute God's substantiality, we would have to deny him thinghood as well,

16. Some of God's attributes, such as substantiality, simplicity, and immutability, can be represented without a *nota actionis* (a mark of activity), while others, such as omnipotence, freedom, and wisdom, cannot. The former *perfectiones* Baumgarten calls *perfectiones quiescentes*, and the latter *perfectiones operativae* (*Metaphysica*, §815).

and thus cancel the whole concept of God. But if God is assumed to be an *ens realissimum*, then it follows already just from the concept of a thing that God is a substance.

Another of God's ontological predicates is *unity*.¹⁷ For as the most real being, God is thoroughly determined in that in each pair of *praedicatis contradictorie oppositis* only the reality belongs to him. Now this concept of a being having every reality can only be *singularis*. It can never be thought as a species, for in every species the individuals must somehow be distinguished from each other if they are to be particular things. But this distinction can only take place through a distribution of reality. In other words, one thing must have something in itself which the others do not. But this contradicts our concept of the *realissimo*.

From God's unity follows his *simplicity*.¹⁸ For every *compositum reale* [composite of real things] is to be regarded as reality composed of substances external to each other and yet standing in *commercio* [in reciprocal interaction]. Hence if God is to be *compositum*, he must consist of many parts. Now either each of these parts would be an *ens realissimum* (and then there would be many *realissima*, which is a contradiction); or else the parts would be *partim realia*, *partim negativa*. But in this case the whole consisting of these parts would also be only a *partim reale*, *partim negativum*, and consequently not a *realissimum* and not God. For an unlimited reality can never arise out of many limited realities, because in order for a thing to have unlimited reality, all realities must be united in one subject. It is just this unification, therefore, which constitutes the form of an *entis realissimi*. But as soon as realities are distributed (and there must be such a distribution among the parts of the *compositi* if the *entis realissimum* is to be an *ens compositum*), then limitations arise. For whenever a reality is distributed among several things, the whole reality cannot be in each of them, and consequently each part lacks some of the reality. The unity of a *compositi* is always only a contingent unity.

17. "To God belongs the highest unity, which is inseparable from the plurality of the highest realities" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §815).

18. "Every substance is a monad. God is a substance. Hence God is a monad and a simple being. But if the highest simplicity of God is granted, then it is denied that there could be any ground for his being a composite, made up of external parts" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §838).

of combination. Hence the parts of every composite can always be represented separately. If in fact they are combined, it still could have been otherwise. But the unity of a simple substance is necessary. Thus the simplicity of the *entis realissimi* can also be proven from its absolute necessity. For if the *ens realissimum* were an *ens compositum*, then all its parts would have to be absolutely necessary if the whole is to be absolutely necessary. For the whole cannot be constituted in a manner different from the parts of which it consists. But then there would be many *entia absolute necessaria*, which contradicts the concept of absolute necessity. A third proof for the simplicity of God is derived from the fact that every *compositum* is also *divisibile*, in that it consists of parts. But divisibility always involves the inner changeableness of a thing, since the relation between the parts of an *ente composito* can be changed. Hence every composite substance is internally changeable. But this contradicts the concept of an *ente realissimo*. Now it follows also that because the most real being must be simple, it must be immaterial as well. For matter is what constitutes anything composite.

Further, *immutability* belongs to God, and is one of his *perfectionibus quiescentibus*. But immutability as a concept should not be confused with the immutability as a thing. Baumgarten has not duly observed this distinction. For he infers the unchangeableness of God from the fact that every determination of a most real being is absolutely and internally unchangeable.¹⁹ But from this fact it follows only that the concept of God is transcendently unchangeable in that God is thoroughly determined through his concept.

But what is change or mutation? It is a succession of states. So changes can only be thought possible in time, for only here is there succession. If we want to prove the unchangeableness of God, then we first have to prove that God is not in time. But this can be seen clearly from the concept of an *entis realissimi*. For if God were in time he would have to be limited. But he is a *realissimus*, and consequently he is not in time. God's real unchange-

19. "The determinations of every necessary being are absolutely and internally immutable. Therefore, God is absolutely and internally immutable" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §839).

ableness also follows from his absolute necessity. For if God were so constituted that something could arise in him which was not already actual, then it could not be said that he is necessary in his actual constitution. For he could have been otherwise than he is, since he could be sometimes in one state and sometimes in another. From this highest immutability of God with respect to all his realities it follows that it is anthropomorphic to represent God as being first wrathful and then merciful. For this would be to suppose a change in God. But God is and remains always the same, equally merciful and equally just. It depends on us alone whether we are to become objects of his mercy or of his punitive justice. The change takes place within us. It is our relation to God which is changed. If we better ourselves and alter our previous relation to God as culpable sinners to a just God, then after our improvement this relation will be canceled and will be replaced by a relation of upright friends of virtue. It does not accord with the concept of an unchangeable God that God should be more effective in us just because we make moral betterment our end. Rather, when we work for our betterment, it is we ourselves who are more susceptible to the influence of his power, and we participate in it to a higher degree. His influence itself does not increase or become stronger, because this would be a change in him. But we feel it to be stronger, because we no longer resist it. Yet the influence itself remains the same.

Baumgarten next discusses polytheism.²⁰ It doubtless arose because men could not comprehend the apparent conflict of purposes in the world, the mixture of good and evil. So they assumed several beings as the cause of this conflict and assigned to each a special department. Nevertheless, in addition to these lower gods every heathen people has the thought of a special original source out of which they flowed. But they made this supreme principle in and for itself so blessed that it has nothing at all to do with the world. Examples of this are the Tibetans and other existing heathen people of inner Asia. And in fact they follow the course of human reason, which needs a thoroughgoing

20. "Many gods are impossible . . . God is unique. POLYTHEISM is the proposition positing more than one god, and is an error" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §846).

unity in its representation and cannot stop until it has reached the One which is higher than everything. Polytheism as such, not combined with a supreme original source, would be in conflict with common human understanding. For common sense teaches monotheism by taking as its supreme principle a being which is all in all. Thus it should not be thought that the doctrine of one God needs to be built on a very advanced human insight. It is rather a need of the most common reason. Hence it was something universally acknowledged even in the beginning. But since men subsequently perceived many kinds of destructive forces in the world, they did not believe that these forces along with the agreement and harmony in nature could be derived from one God. So they assumed various lower gods and ascribed special operations to each one. And since everything in the world carries with it something which can be put under the rubric of either good or evil, they assumed a divine duality, a *principium bonum et malum*. And this was *manichaeism*.²¹ But this doctrine does not seem so wholly nonsensical and absurd if we consider that the manichaeans also posited a supreme principle beyond this duality, from which it had arisen. It would have been absurd, however, if they had made the two principles into a *realissimis*, since it would be contradictory for an *ens realissimum* to be a *principium malum*. Yet they did not think of either principle as a *realissimum*, but gave some realities to one and other realities to the other. Consequently negations could be thought in both their principles. But above these *principiis partim realibus, partim negativis* they thought of a supreme original source of everything, an *ens realissimum*. From this we can see that polytheism did not cancel monotheism, but both could be combined without contradiction, since different concepts were bound up with the term God.

Now let us proceed to another ontological predicate of the *entis realissimi*, which is also one of its *perfectiones quiescentes*. This perfection consists in its being *extramundanum*.²² To this perfection belong the following two points:

21. "MANICHAISM is the proposition positing an equally powerful god as the author of evil, and is an error" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §844).

22. "God is a being outside the world (*ens extramundanum*). And the world

(1) God is an *ens a mundo diversum*, or external to the world in an intellectual way. This proposition is opposed to Spinozism, for Spinoza believed that God and the world were one substance and that apart from the world there is no substance at all. This error flowed from his faulty definition of substance. As a mathematician, he was accustomed to finding arbitrary definitions and deriving propositions from them. Now this procedure does work quite well in mathematics, but if we try to apply these methods to philosophy we will be led into error.²³ For in philosophy we must first seek out the characteristics themselves and acquaint ourselves with them before we can construct their definitions. But Spinoza did not do this. Instead, he constructed an arbitrary definition of substance. *Substantia*, he said, *est cuius existentia non indiget existentia alterius*.²⁴ Assuming this definition, he correctly inferred that there is only one substance, God. But everything in the world is an *accidens* inhering in this divinity, since each thing has need of God's existence for its own existence. Consequently everything existing is in God and nothing can be or be thought as external to God. But this only means that God and the world are one. For the whole world is in God and nothing is outside him. Now this argument is just as mistaken in its content as it is correct in its form. For it is derived from a wholly false principle, from a faulty definition of substance. But we have already given another account of substance, and its correctness is clear because it is not assumed arbitrarily (like Spinoza's) but is derived instead from the concept of a thing itself. The concept of a thing in general teaches us that

is not something essential to him, nor is it his essence, nor one of God's attributes, nor modes, nor modifications, nor accidents. THEOLOGICAL SPINOZISM is the proposition denying that God is a being outside the world, and is an error" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §855).

23. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A727f/B755f.

24. "Substance is that whose existence does not require the existence of anything else." Kant is not quoting Spinoza accurately. *Ethics*, Part I, definition III, actually reads: *Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est et per se concipitur: hoc est id, cuius conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debet*. That is: "By substance, I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; it is that whose concept can be formed without requiring the concept of any other thing" (Spinoza, *Opera* [The Hague, 1882], I, p. 39).

everything real which exists for itself without being a determination of any other things, is a substance. Consequently all things are substances. For my own self-consciousness testifies that I do not²⁵ refer all my actions to God as the final subject which is not the predicate of any other thing. Hence the concept of a substance arises when I perceive in myself that I am not the predicate of any other thing. For instance: when I think, I am conscious that my ego thinks in me, and not in some other thing. So I conclude that my thinking does not inhere in another thing external to me, but inheres in myself. Consequently I conclude that I am a substance, that is, that I exist for myself and am not the predicate of any other thing. I myself am a thing, and thus also a substance. But now if I myself am a substance, then either I must be God himself or God is a substance different from me, and consequently different from the world. The first supposition is absurd, because it contradicts the concept of an *entis realissimi*. Consequently there must exist apart from me some other thing existing for itself which is not a predicate of any other existing thing. That is, there must be another existing substance. Indeed, apart from me there may be many other different substances, because infinitely many things are possible besides myself. But each thing, just because it is a thing, is *eo ipso* not a predicate of any other thing. Instead, it exists for itself and is thus a substance. Now all these things are distinguished from each other, because otherwise they would not be particular things. Hence an *ens realissimum* (which is already considered as a thing in having the highest reality) must also exist for itself and not be a predicate of another thing. That is, it must be a substance distinguished from every other. Taken together, the things which are comprehended in the world are all substances, because they would have to cease being things if they were mere determinations of some other thing. Consequently the whole world will not be a determination of God. Rather, the *ens realissimum* must be distinguished from it.

25. Pölitiz's text reads: *Denn das Bewusstsein meiner selbst zeugt, dass ich alle Handlungen auf Gott, als auf das letzte Subject . . . beziehe . . .* (There appears to be a nicht left out of the sentence.)

(2) God is an *ens extramundanum*. That is, he does not belong to the world at all, but is wholly outside it. This doctrine is opposed to the stoic proposition that God is the *world-soul*. But if this were so, then God and the world would have to stand *in commercio*, that is, each would have to influence the other. So God would have to be not only active but also passive. But this sort of reciprocal operation would contradict God and his concepts as an *ente realissimo* and *necessario*. For an *ens absolute necessarium* is *independens*, and consequently also *impassibile* (not passive). But if the world is to have influence on God so as to affect him, then *eo ipso* he would have to be dependent on the world. Man, of course, can only intuit an object insofar as he has the receptivity enabling him to be affected by it. But such an intuition cannot be predicated of God, because a limitation is comprehended in it.

Thus God is isolated. Yet not in the sense that he stands in no connection with the world at all, but rather only in the sense that he stands in no connection involving a *reciprocal* causality (of a *commercii*). Thus God has an influence on the world, he is active. But the world has no influence on him, that is, he is not passive. We have already dealt with God's *infinity* in the metaphysical sense, and it was shown above that instead of this one could better say that God has *all-sufficiency*. For the latter is a concept of the pure understanding, while the former is borrowed from mathematics and even belongs only to it.

Now let us consider God's *eternity*.²⁶ The magnitude of existence is duration. Hence we can combine the concept of magnitude with existence only through the mediation of time. For this is the measure of duration. Now *eternity* is: duration without

26. "In God there are no successive states. Hence God is not in time. . . . If a contingently eternal being be posited, its eternity differs in many ways from God's eternity. For (1) its duration as a continuous modification of successive states is obnoxious [to the divine nature]. (2) Its eternity has no protensive end; yet such an eternity could not really be called infinite. And (3) its eternity would be time without beginning or end (and could be called infinite for this reason); yet it is not really infinite mathematically. For a being having successive states is never actually all that it can be in its internal determinations" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §§849–850).

beginning or end. But what is beginning? What is end? Beginning is an existence. Very well. But what does this mean if not that before the beginning of a thing there was a time when it was not, or that after its end there will be a time when it is no more? Here, therefore, I still have a concept of time, and we cannot find a concept of eternity which would not still be affected with the concept of time. For beginning and end are only possible in time. The divine existence, however, can never be thought of as determinable through time. For then we would have to represent God as a *phaenomenon*. But this would be an anthropomorphic predicate, unthinkable in an *ente realissimo* because it contains limitations in it. For the existence of a thing in time is always a succession of parts of time, one after the other. Duration in time is, so to speak, a continuous disappearing and a continuous beginning. We can never live through²⁷ a certain year without having already lived through a previous one. But none of this can be said of God, since he is unchangeable. Hence since it is a continuous limitation, time must be opposed in quality to an *ente realissimo*. But if I represent eternity as a duration without beginning or end (which is about the most minimal account of eternity I can give), the concept of time is still mixed in. For duration, beginning, and end are all predicates which can only be thought of things in time. Of course it is true that I am negating beginning and end in relation to God. But I do not gain much by this fact, since my concept of eternity is not in the least enlightened or purified through such negations. Fundamentally I am still representing God as a being within time, even if I do remove beginning and end from him. But it is most necessary to leave all the conditions of time out of the concept of God, because otherwise we could be misled and accept a number of anthropomorphic consequences. For instance, if I think of God as existing within time but having no beginning or end, it is impossible for me to think how God could have created the world without suffering any change. Or again, I might ask what God was doing before there was a world. But if I reject all

27. Live through = *erleben*.

the conditions of time, then this *before* and *after* are concepts which cannot be thought in God at all. Hence even if I must be content to have very little comprehension of God's eternity, my concept may still be pure and free from errors, even though it is incomplete.

Some have tried to prevent the difficulties which arise from representing God's existence as within time, by insisting that all the consecutiveness of time be thought as simultaneous in God. But this pretension challenges us to think a contradiction. *Consecutive* states of a thing, which are nevertheless *simultaneous*. What is this, if not a *contradictio in adjecto*? *Simultaneously* means: at one time. Hence to think of consecutive parts of time as occurring at one time is contradictory. From all this we can see that if eternity is to be represented as a special attribute of God, it is still impossible to think of it apart from time, because time itself is a condition of all our representations, a form of sensibility. If we nevertheless want to exclude time from the concept of God, then little remains of eternity except a representation of the necessity of his existence. But we have to make do with this on account of the weakness of our reason. For it would be impertinent for us to want to lift the curtain which veils in holy darkness him who is invariably and forever. We must eliminate every sensible representation of time from the concept of God, because such representations can easily corrupt a concept which is supposed to be free from all limitation. But if we do eliminate them, then to be *eternal* means only: to be *absolutely necessary*. Now although we have seen that we are unable even to think this absolute necessity conceptually, it is nevertheless a concept reason necessitates us to assume before it can find rest.

Eternity has a great similarity to *omnipresence*. Just as our sensible representation of eternity fills all of time, so according to our sensible representation God's presence fills all of space. Hence the spatial presence of God, or God's presence in space, is subject to just the same difficulties as is his eternity when it is conjoined with time. For it is a contradiction that a thing should be in more than one place in space at the same time.

God's *omnipotence* is usually understood as his capacity to

make possible things actual.²⁸ But it would be most presumptuous to test the power of God on things which are in themselves contradictory (such as a circle with four corners) and conclude that God is not capable of them. It would be foolish and frivolous to think of a being with supreme dignity and majesty in relation to *non entia*. In general there is something very improper about human reason presuming to dispute stubbornly about God, the most sublime thing which it can think only feebly, and wanting to represent everything of him, even the impossible. For whenever reason wants to venture into thoughts of this magnitude, it ought first to make a modest retreat and, fully conscious of its own incapacity, to take counsel with itself as to how it might worthily think of God. Hence all such expressions are presumptuous, even if they are only posited as hypotheses; for instance, some dare to picture God as a tyrant who makes the punishments of hell eternal or (according to the doctrine of predestination) who unconditionally determines some men to blessedness and others to damnation.

[The Value of Transcendental Theology]

Anthropomorphism is usually divided into the *vulgar* sort (where God is thought of in human shape) and the *subtle* sort (where human perfections are ascribed to God, but without separating the limitations from them).²⁹ The latter sort of anthropomorphism is a particularly dangerous enemy of our pure knowledge of God, since vulgar anthropomorphism is too obviously an error for men to be fooled by it very often. So we have to turn all our power against *anthropomorphismum subtilem*, because it is easier for it to creep into our concept of God and corrupt it. For it is better not to be able to represent something at all than only to be able to think of it confused with errors.

28. "Omnipotence is the force sufficient to actualize everything" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §832).

29. "God has no shape (*figuram*). VULGAR ANTHROPOMORPHISM (*Anthropomorphismus crassior*) is the error of attributing some shape to God (e.g., the human). SUBTLE ANTHROPOMORPHISM (*Anthropomorphismus subtilior*) is the error of attributing to God the imperfections of finite things (e.g., of man)" (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §848).

It is for this reason that the transcendental theology we have been treating is of such great utility. It puts us in a position to remove from our knowledge of God everything sensible inhering in our concepts. Or at least by its means we become conscious that if we predicate something of God which cannot be thought apart from the conditions of sensibility, then we must give a proper account of these predicates, even if we are not always in a position to represent them in a manner wholly free from faults. It would be easiest to deal successfully with all the consequences of anthropomorphism if only our reason voluntarily relinquished its claim to know the nature of God and his attributes according to their inner constitution, and if our reason, mindful of its weakness, never tried to exceed its bounds, but was content to know only so much as it has need for about him who must always remain the object of an eternal quest. This interest of humanity is best furthered and attained *per viam analogiam*, as we will see below.

With this we will conclude our discussion of ontotheology,³⁰ in which we have considered God as the *original being*. At times we have inferred this originality from the concept of the *entis realissimi*, and sometimes we have inferred conversely from the concept of the *entis originarii* to its highest reality. Our effort and caution in the knowledge of this speculative part of theology have been rewarded in that we may assume, at least as an undoubted *hypothesis* of speculative reason, that there is a God, an *ens realissimum* with all the predicates flowing from this concept. Moreover, we can be sure that no rational man could ever prove the contrary to us and tear down this our support of all human reason. And is this not better than boasting that we can know God and his properties apodictically through pure reason, while having to fear each attack of our opponents? For what reason has taught us about God is faultless and free from error. Without hesitation we may found our further investigation on this modest but correct knowledge, and we may build on it with trust. It is true that all we know of God in transcendental theology is the mere concept of a highest original ground. But

30. Pöhlitz's text reads *Ontologie*.

although this concept is useless for itself and without any additional knowledge, it is excellent when it is applied as the substratum of all theology.

Second Section: *Cosmotheology*

In our treatment of the ontological proof for God's existence, we have already taken the opportunity to deal with the cosmological proof. But we did this only in order to compare both proofs of transcendental theology, and to show the close kinship between them. Now let us try to set forth a more detailed account of the whole concept of God insofar as it can be derived from a foundation in experience, yet without determining more closely the world to which this experience belongs. Cosmotheology teaches us a theistic concept of God, since in it we come to know God as the supreme intelligence, as a highest being who is author of all things through understanding and freedom. The deist, in his concept of God, understands merely a blindly acting eternal nature as the root of all things, an original being, or a supreme cause of the world. But he does not venture to assert that God is the ground of all things through freedom. Since we are interested only in the concept of an author of the world, that is, in the concept of a living God, let us see whether reason can provide us with this theistic concept of God as a *summa intelligentia*. This knowledge will not be wholly pure and independent of experience, but the experience which has to be its foundation is the simplest experience there could be, the experience of our self. Hence now we will proceed to the psychological predicates borrowed from the nature of our own soul, and we will ascribe them to God after separating all the limits from them. But if in the case of ontological predicates derived a priori much caution was necessary to avoid mixing in external sensible representations, think how much care will be necessary now, when we are founding everything only on empirical principles, or at least when it is from objects of sense (such as we ourselves are) that we must abstract the determinations from which we are to form the concept of a highest intelligence. Now we will have

to apply all our attention if the reality is not to escape from us along with the limitations, and if, instead of making our concept of God more perfect, we are not to make it impure by bringing negations into it. If we meet with any reality in ourselves which we are able to ascribe to a being which has all reality, then we must be very careful to avoid predicating of God the negative element inhering in that reality as it is found in us. This separation of everything limited from the real is often very difficult for us, and nothing of the whole reality may be left over. In this case, where nothing remains after the careful testing of the reality and the removal of every limit, it is self-evident that we cannot think of such a thing in God. But even if the reality which is brought out *via negationis* from some perfection in us is only very small, we still should not omit it from God as long as it contains a true reality. Instead, we must predicate it of God *per viam eminentiae*. In a case like this the way of analogy is especially appropriate. For it teaches us the perfect similarity between the relation of things in the world (where one is regarded as ground and the other as consequence) and the relation of God to the world which has its being from him.

[God's Knowledge]

Firstly, we find in our soul a faculty of knowledge. No one can doubt that it is a reality. Everyone holds it to be a great perfection in which he shares to some extent. Hence we must introduce it into our concept of an *entis realissimi* too, after all the limits inhering in it have been carefully separated out. From this it follows that no contradiction will arise from the addition of this reality to our concept of a most perfect being, since one reality does not cancel another in a concept. But if we unite a faculty of knowledge with other perfections in our concept of God, it still does not follow that this reality belongs to the thing itself, in the synthesis of all other predicates. For as was shown above, this would mean that we would have to be acquainted with every predicate of the thing and with all the effects of each, and we would have to know how all these predicates would relate to each other when they were actually put together. But such knowledge of a most perfect being is impossible for the

human understanding. Thus we cannot prove with apodictic certainty that the reality of a faculty of knowledge does not cancel any of the other realities when put together with them.³¹ But neither can any man ever prove the contrary, that in fact some reality in the thing itself would be canceled or limited in its effects if it were put in combination with a faculty of knowledge. For both transcend the faculty of human reason. In such cases, where it is equally impossible to prove either side apodictically, we are free to choose the alternative which has the most probability for us. And no one can deny that the concept of an *entis realissimi* itself gives us a much greater right to ascribe a faculty of knowledge to it than to exclude such a faculty from the total reality. Here we already have one undoubted reason on our side in the fact that nothing contradictory shows itself in our concept. And while it does not follow that the object itself is possible in reality, still we cannot see any reason why this reality should not belong to the synthesis of attributes of a most perfect being, even if we cannot prove it with apodictic certainty from our concept of an *ente realissimo*. The deist has nothing on his side when he denies it, because such a denial would require an insight into the nature of an *entis realissimi* which would transcend all human reason.

But we have in addition a stronger ground of proof that God has a faculty of knowledge, a ground derived from the *constitution* of an *entis realissimi*. And a ground of proof derived from that always has more strength than grounds of proof taken merely from the concept of an *entis realissimi*. We argue that an *ens originarium* containing within itself the ground of the possibility of all things must have a faculty of knowledge because it is the original source of beings which do have this faculty (for example, man). For how could something be derived from a being unless this original being itself had it? Thus the original being of all beings must have a faculty of knowledge. Of course

31. In the Danzig manuscript of the Lectures Kant attributes to Hume the conjecture that "perhaps the reality of understanding does not admit of being united with the other realities." (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28, 2, p. 1266.) I am unable, however, to locate any passage in Hume where anything of the sort is said.

In the German character one feature, if not a rational one, at least to some extent a noble one, is that it regards law as such, whatever its basis or consequences, as something sacrosanct. If Germany is perishing as a separate and independent state, as it to all appearance is, and if the German nation is finally perishing altogether as a people, it is ever a pleasing spectacle to see [15] in the vanguard, amidst the spirits of destruction, the fear of the law.

Such a spectacle the political situation and the constitutional law of Germany would afford if Germany were to be regarded as a state. Its political situation would have to be treated as legal anarchy, its constitutional law as a legal system opposed to the state. But everything harmonizes with the view that Germany is no longer to be regarded as a unified political whole but only as a mass of independent and essentially sovereign states. Yet, it is said, Germany is an 'empire', 'a body politic', it stands under 'a common imperial head' in an 'imperial union'. To these expressions as legal titles no disrespect is to be paid; but an essay concerned with concepts can make nothing of titles of this sort; though from the definition of the concepts it may make clear what meaning such titles may possess. Of course expressions like 'Empire', 'Imperial Head' are often taken for concepts, and they must be makeshifts in emergency.

The constitutional lawyer who cannot call Germany a state any longer, because otherwise he would have to grant many inferences which follow from the concept of a state, and which he yet may not grant, has recourse, since Germany is still not to count as a 'non-state', to taking the title of 'Empire' as a concept. Or, since Germany is neither a democracy nor an aristocracy but has been supposed to be essentially a monarchy, while the Emperor on the other hand is not to be regarded as a monarch, his title of 'Imperial Head' is used as a makeshift even in a system where not titles but defined concepts are supposed to rule.

By the use of the quite general concept of 'Imperial Head', the Emperor is assigned to a category along with the one-time Doge of Venice and the Sultan of Turkey. These equally are heads of states, but the former was the most restricted head of an aristocracy, while the latter is the most unrestricted head of a despotism. And since the concept of a 'Head' covers all sorts of variations in the scope of the supreme authority of the state, it is completely

vague and [16] therefore valueless. It professes to express something and at bottom has expressed nothing.

In the scientific and historical field we must fight shy of such meaningless expressions, even if in actual life the German genius uses them as expedients. Grant the stubbornness of the German character in continually resting on its own will in civil life; grant separate and irreconcilable state interests in the political field; but suppose that for other important reasons a unity is none the less to be established in civil life or in politics: then there is no better means to the end than to find some general expression which satisfies both sides and which yet leaves both sides at home with their own will. The result is that the difference remains as it was before, or, if in fact one side must give in, then at least the acknowledgement of giving in is evaded by the use of this general expression.

With such general expressions the Germans have kept alive for centuries a show of union in which in fact no member has yielded one jot of its claims to independence. Reflection on this phenomenon, at any rate if it is to be scientific, must cling to concepts, and, in judging whether a country is a state, must not dally with general expressions but must bring into consideration the range of power left to what is to be called a state. Since closer examination reveals that what is called in general terms 'constitutional law' [for rights of the state] consists in rights *against* the state, the question would arise whether in spite of all this a *power* still accrues to the state in virtue of which it really is a state. If what is necessary to this end is examined more closely and compared with the condition of Germany in respect of the state's power, it will appear that Germany cannot in strictness be called a state any longer. We proceed to go through the various chief powers which must be found in a state.

[§ 1. CONCEPT OF THE STATE]

[17] A multitude of human beings can only call itself a state if it be united for the common defence of the entirety of its property. What is self-explanatory in this proposition must none the less be stated, namely that this union has not merely the intention of defending itself; the point is that it defends itself by actual arms, be its power and its success what they may. There will be no one