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Religion and Rational Theology

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*An old question raised again: Is the human
race constantly progressing?*

I.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW IN THIS MATTER?

We desire a fragment of human history and one, indeed, that is drawn not from past but future time, therefore a *predictive* history; if it is not based on known laws (like eclipses of the sun and moon), this history is designated as divinatorial, and yet natural; but if it can be acquired in no other way than through a supernatural communication and widening of one's view of future time, this history is called *premonitory* (prophetic).* – If it is asked whether the human *race* at large is progressing perpetually toward the better, the important thing is not the natural history of human beings (whether new races may arise in the future), but rather his *moral history* and, more precisely, his history not as a species according to the *generic concept* (*singulorum*), but as the totality of human beings united socially on earth and apportioned into peoples (*universorum*).

2.

HOW CAN WE KNOW IT?

As a divinatorial historical narrative of things imminent in future time, consequently as a possible representation a priori of events which are supposed to happen then. – But how is a history a priori possible? – Answer: if the diviner himself *makes* and contrives the events which he announces in advance.

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It was all very well for the Jewish prophets to prophesy that sooner or later not simply decadence but complete dissolution awaited their state, for they themselves were the authors of this fate. – As national leaders they had loaded their constitution with so much ecclesiastical freight, and civil freight tied to it, that their state became utterly unfit to subsist of itself, and especially unfit to subsist together with neighboring nations. Hence the jeremiads of their priests were naturally bound to be lost upon the winds, because the priests obstinately persisted in their design for an

* From Pythia³⁵ to the gipsy woman, whoever dabbles in divination (doing it without knowledge or honesty) is said to be a *soothsayer*.

untenable constitution created by themselves; and thus they could infallibly foresee the issue.

So far as their influence extends, our politicians do precisely the same thing and are just as lucky in their prophecies. – We must, they say, take human beings as they are, not as pedants ignorant of the world or good-natured visionaries fancy they ought to be. But in place of that *as they are* it would be better to say what they *have made* them – stubborn and inclined to revolt – through unjust constraint, through perfidious plots placed in the hands of the government; obviously then, if the government allows the reins to relax a little, sad consequences ensue which verify the prophecy of those supposedly sagacious statesmen.

Ecclesiastics, too, occasionally prophesy the complete destruction of religion and the imminent appearance of Antichrist; and in doing so they are performing precisely what is requisite to call him up. This happens because they have not seen to impressing on their parishes moral principles which lead directly to the better, but rather fabricate into essential duty observances and historical beliefs which are supposed to effect it indirectly; from this, of course, can grow the mechanical unanimity as in a civil constitution, but none in moral disposition. But then they complain about irreligion, which they themselves have caused and thus could predict even without any special prophetic talent.

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3.

DIVISION OF THE CONCEPT OF THAT WHICH WE WISH TO FOREKNOW AS REGARDS THE FUTURE

In three cases one could make predictions. The human race exists either in continual *retrogression* toward wickedness, or in perpetual *progression* toward improvement in its moral destination, or in eternal *stagnation* in its present stage of moral worth among creatures (a stagnation with which eternal rotation in orbit around the same point is one and the same).

The *first* assertion we can call *moral terrorism*, and the *second eudaemonism* (which could also be called *chiliasm* if we view the goal of progress within a broad prospectus); but the *third* we can term *abderitism*³⁶ because, since a true stagnation in matters of morality is not possible, a perpetually changing upward tendency and an equally frequent and profound relapse (an eternal oscillation, as it were) amounts to nothing more than if the subject had remained in the same place, standing still.

a.

Concerning the terroristic manner of representing human history

Decline into wickedness cannot be incessant in the human race, for at a certain stage of disintegration it would destroy itself. Hence in connection

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with the increase of great atrocities looming up like mountains, and evils commensurate with them, it is said: now things cannot grow worse; judgment day is at the door; and the pious enthusiast by this time is already dreaming of the restoration of all things and a renovated world after the time that this one will have perished in flames.

b.

Concerning the eudaemonistic manner of representing human history

It may always be conceded that the proportion of good and evil elements inherent in our predisposition remains constant and can be neither augmented nor diminished in the same individual; how then should the quantity of good in our predisposition increase? For that would happen only through the freedom of the subject, for which purpose the subject would in turn require a greater reservoir of good than it now possesses. — The effects cannot surpass the power of the efficient cause; thus the quantum of good in the human being mixed with the evil cannot exceed a certain measure beyond which it would be able to work its way up and thus ever proceed toward the better. Eudaemonism, with its sanguine hopes, therefore, appears to be untenable and to promise little in a prophetic history of humanity in favor of progress endlessly broadening its course toward the good.

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c.

Concerning the abderitic hypothesis of the human race for the predetermination of its history

This opinion may well have the majority of voices on its side. Bustling folly is the character of our species: people hastily set off on the path of the good, but do not persevere steadfastly upon it; indeed, in order to avoid being bound to a single goal, even if only for the sake of variety they reverse the plan of progress, build in order to demolish, and impose upon themselves the hopeless effort of rolling the stone of Sisyphus uphill in order to let it roll back down again.' The principle of evil in the natural predisposition of the human race, therefore, does not seem to be amalgamated (blended) here with that of the good, but each appears rather to be neutralized by the other. Inertia (which is called here stagnation) would be the result of this. It is a vain affair to have good so alternate with evil that the whole traffic of our species with itself on this globe would have to be considered as a mere farcical comedy, for this can endow our species with no greater value in the eyes of reason than that which other animal species possess, species which carry on this game with fewer costs and without expenditure of thought.

'Princip

4:83

4.

THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS IS NOT TO BE
RESOLVED DIRECTLY THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Even if we felt that the human race, considered as a whole, was to be conceived as progressing and proceeding forward for however long a time, still no one can guarantee that now, this very moment, with regard to the physical disposition of our species, the epoch of its decline would not be liable to occur; and inversely, if it is moving backwards, and in an accelerated fall into baseness, a person may not despair even then of encountering a juncture (*punctum flexus contrarii*)⁵ where the moral predisposition in our race would be able to turn anew toward the better. For we are dealing with beings that act freely, to whom, it is true, what they *ought* to do may be *dictated* in advance, but of whom it may not be *predicted* what they will do: we are dealing with beings who, from the feeling of self-inflicted evil, when things disintegrate altogether, know how to adopt a strengthened motive for making them even better than they were before that state. – But “miserable mortals,” says the Abbé Coyer, “nothing is constant in your lives except inconstancy!”³⁷

If the course of human affairs seems so senseless to us, perhaps it lies in a poor choice of position from which we regard it. Viewed from the earth, the planets sometimes move backwards, sometimes forward, and sometimes not at all. But if the standpoint selected is the sun, an act which only reason can perform, according to the Copernican hypothesis they move constantly in their regular course. Some people, however, who in other respects are not stupid, like to persist obstinately in their way of explaining the phenomena and in the point of view which they have once adopted, even if they should thereby entangle themselves to the point of absurdity in Tychonic cycles and epicycles.³⁸ – But, and this is precisely the misfortune, we are not capable of placing ourselves in this position when it is a question of the prediction of free actions. For that would be the standpoint of Providence which is situated beyond all human wisdom, and which likewise extends to the free actions of the human being; these actions, of course, the human being can *see*, but not *foresee* with certitude (for the divine eye there is no distinction in this matter); because, in the final analysis, the human being requires coherency according to natural laws, but with respect to his future *free* actions he must dispense with this guidance or direction.

If we were able to attribute to the human being an inherent and unalterably good, albeit limited, will, he would be able to predict with certainty the progress of his species toward the better, because it would concern an occurrence that he himself could produce. But in connection with the

⁵ the point of rebound in the opposite direction

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mixture of good and evil in his predisposition, with the proportion of which he not acquainted, he himself does not know what effect he might expect from it.

5. YET THE PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE MUST BE CONNECTED TO SOME EXPERIENCE

There must be some experience in the human race which, as an event, points to the disposition and capacity of the human race to be the cause of its own advance toward the better, and (since this should be the act of a being endowed with freedom), toward the human race as being the author of this advance. But from a given cause an event as an effect can be predicted [only] if the circumstances prevail which contribute to it. That these conditions must come to pass some time or other can, of course, be predicted in general, as in the calculation of probability in games of chance; but that prediction cannot enable us to know whether what is predicted is to happen in my life and I am to have the experience of it. — Therefore, an occurrence must be sought which points to the existence of such a cause and to its effectiveness in the human race, undetermined with regard to time, and which would allow progress toward the better to be concluded as an inevitable consequence. This conclusion then could also be extended to the history of the past (that it has always been in progress) in such a way that that occurrence would have to be considered not itself as the cause of history, but only as an intimation, a historical sign (*signum rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognostikon*)¹ demonstrating the tendency of the human race viewed in its entirety, that is, seen not as [a sum of] individuals (for that would yield an interminable enumeration and computation), but rather as divided into nations and states (as it is encountered on earth).

6. CONCERNING AN OCCURRENCE IN OUR TIME WHICH DEMONSTRATES THIS MORAL TENDENCY OF THE HUMAN RACE

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This occurrence consists neither in momentous deeds nor crimes committed by human beings whereby what was great among human beings is made small or what was small is made great, nor in ancient splendid political structures which vanish as if by magic while others come forth in their place as if from the depths of the earth. No, nothing of the sort. It is

¹ a sign of recalling, demonstrating, foretelling

simply the mode of thinking of the spectators which reveals itself *publicly* in this game of great revolutions, and manifests such a universal yet disinterested sympathy for the players on one side against those on the other, even at the risk that this partiality could become very disadvantageous for them if discovered. Owing to its universality, this mode of thinking demonstrates a character of the human race at large and all at once; owing to its disinterestedness, a moral character of humanity, at least in its predisposition, a character which not only permits people to hope for progress toward the better, but is already itself progress insofar as its capacity is sufficient for the present.

The revolution³⁹ of a gifted people which have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry; it may be filled with misery and atrocities to the point that a right-thinking human being, were he boldly to hope to execute it successfully the second time, would never resolve to make the experiment at such cost – this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a wishful *participation* that borders closely on enthusiasm⁴⁰ the very expression of which is fraught with danger; this sympathy, therefore, can have no other cause than a moral predisposition in the human race.

This moral cause exerting its influence is twofold: first, that of the *right*, that a nation must not be hindered in providing itself with a civil constitution, which appears good to the people themselves; and second, that of the *end* (which is, at the same time, a duty), that that same national constitution alone be *just* and morally good in itself, created in such a way as to avoid, by its very nature, principles permitting offensive war. It can be no other than a republican constitution, republican at least in essence;^{*} 7:86 it thus establishes the condition whereby war (the source of all evil and corruption of morals) is deterred; and, at least negatively, progress toward the better is assured humanity in spite of all its infirmity, for it is at least left undisturbed in its advance.

This, then, plus the passionate participation in the good, i.e., an effect

* But this is not to say that a nation which has a monarchical constitution should therewith usurp the law, nor even only cherish the secret wish of seeing it changed; for its position in Europe, perhaps very extended, can recommend that constitution as the only one by which that nation can maintain itself among powerful neighbors. Likewise the grumbling of the subjects, provoked not by the internal policy of the government but by the conduct of the latter toward foreigners, if perchance that conduct should hinder the subjects in their republican tendencies, is no proof at all of the nation's dissatisfaction with its own constitution, but rather of love for it; because the nation is the more assured against any danger the more other nations pursue a republican policy. – Nevertheless, some slanderous sycophants, to make themselves important, have sought to pass off this innocuous political twaddle as fondness for innovation, Jacobinism and mob action which would threaten the state; yet, under the circumstances, there was not even the least reason for these allegations, particularly in a country more than a hundred miles removed from the scene of the revolution.
⁴⁰ *Enthusiasm*

(although not to be wholly esteemed, since *enthusiasm* as such deserves censure), provide through this history the occasion for the following remark which is important for anthropology: genuine enthusiasm^v always moves only toward what is ideal and, indeed, to what is purely moral, such as the concept of right, and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest. Monetary rewards will not elevate the adversaries of the revolution to the zeal and grandeur of soul which the pure concept of right produced in them; and even the concept of honor among the old martial nobility (an analogue to enthusiasm) vanished before the weapons of those who kept in view* the right of the nation to which they belonged and of which they considered themselves the guardians; with what exaltation the uninvolved public looking on sympathized then without the least intention of assisting.

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7.

PROPHETIC HISTORY OF HUMANITY

In the principle there must be something *moral*, which reason presents as pure; but because of its great and epoch-making influence, reason must

* Of such an enthusiasm – for upholding justice for the human race we can say: “postquam ad arma Vulcania ventum est, mortalis mucro glacies ceu futilis ictu dissiluit.”³⁸ Why has a ruler never dared openly to declare that he recognizes absolutely no right of the people opposed to him, that his people owe their happiness solely to the beneficence of a government which confers this happiness upon them, and that all presumption of the subject to a right opposed to the government (since this right comprehends the concept of permissible resistance) is absurd and even culpable? – The cause is that such a public declaration would rouse all of his subjects against him; although, as docile sheep, led by a benevolent and sensible master, well-fed and powerfully protected, they would have nothing wanting in their welfare for which to lament. – For a being endowed with freedom is not satisfied with the pleasure of life’s comforts which fall to his lot by the act of another (in this case the government); what matters rather is the principle⁷ according to which the individual provides such things for himself. But welfare possesses no *principle* either for him who receives it or for him who dispenses it (one places it here, the other there), inasmuch as what matters in welfare is the material of the will, which is empirical, and which is thus unfit for the universality of a rule. A being endowed with freedom in the consciousness of his superiority over the irrational animal, can and should therefore, according to the *formal* principle of his will, demand no other government for the people to which he belongs than one in which the people are co-legislative; that is, the right of human beings who are supposed to obey must necessarily precede all regard for well-being, and this right is a blessing that is exalted above all price (of utility), and one upon which no government, however beneficent it may persistently be, is permitted to infringe. – But this right is still always only an idea of which the realization is restricted to the condition of accord of its means with the morality which the nation may not transgress; and this may not come to pass through revolution which is always unjust. – To *govern* autocratically and yet in a republican way, that is, in the spirit of republicanism and on an analogy with it – that is what makes a nation satisfied with its constitution.

^v *Enthusiasm* is translated in the passage as “enthusiasm”.

³⁸ “When it met the divine Vulcanian armor, the mortal blade, like brittle ice, snapped in one stroke” (Virgil, *Aeneid* 12:739–41).⁴⁰

⁷ *Princip*

7:88 present it as the acknowledged duty of the human soul, concerning humanity as a whole (*non singularum, sed universorum*), which hails, with such universal and impartial sympathy, the hopes for its success and the efforts toward realizing it.⁴¹ This occurrence is the phenomenon, not of revolution, but (as Erhard expresses it) – a phenomenon of the evolution of a constitution in accordance with *natural right* which, to be sure, is still not won solely by desperate battles – for war, both civil and foreign, destroys all previously existing *statutory* constitutions. This evolution leads to striving after a constitution that cannot be bellicose, that is to say, a republican constitution. The constitution may be republican either in its *political form* or only in its *manner of governing*, in having the state ruled through the unity of the sovereign (the monarch) by analogy with the laws that a nation would provide itself in accordance with the universal principles of legality.

Now I claim to be able to predict to the human race – even without prophetic insight – according to the aspects and omens of our day, the attainment of this goal. That is, I predict its progress toward the better which, from now on, turns out to be no longer completely retrogressive. For such a phenomenon in human history *will not be forgotten*, because it has revealed a tendency and faculty in human nature for improvement such that no politician, affecting wisdom, might have conjured out of the course of things hitherto existing, and one which nature and freedom alone, united in the human race in conformity with inner principles of right, could have promised. But so far as time is concerned, it can promise this only indefinitely and as a contingent occurrence.

But even if the end viewed in connection with this occurrence should not now be attained, even if the revolution or reform of a national constitution should finally miscarry, or, after some time had elapsed, everything should relapse into its former rut (as politicians now predict), that philosophical prophecy still would lose nothing of its force. – For that occurrence is too important, too much interwoven with the interest of humanity, and its influence too widely propagated in all areas of the world to not be recalled on any favorable occasion by the nations which would then be roused to a repetition of new efforts of this kind; because then, in an affair so important for the human race, the intended constitution, at a certain time, must finally attain that constancy which instruction by repeated experience suffices to establish in the minds of all.

7:89 Here, therefore, is a proposition valid for the most rigorous theory, in spite of all skeptics, and not just a well-meaning and a commendable proposition in a practical respect: the human race has always been in progress toward the better and will continue to be so henceforth. To him who does not consider what happens in just some one nation but also has regard to the whole scope of all the peoples on earth who will gradually come to participate in progress, this reveals the prospect of an immeasur-

able time – provided at least that there does not, by some chance, occur a second epoch of natural revolution which will push aside the human race to clear the stage for other creatures, like that which (according to Camper and Blumenbach)⁴² submerged the plant and animal kingdoms before human beings ever existed. For in the face of the omnipotence of nature, or rather its supreme first cause which is inaccessible to us, the human being is, in his turn, but a trifle. But for the sovereigns of his own species also to consider and treat him as such, whether by burdening him as an animal, regarding him as a mere tool of their designs, or exposing him in their conflicts with one another in order to have him massacred – that is no trifle, but a subversion of the *final end* of creation itself.

8.

CONCERNING THE DIFFICULTY OF THE MAXIMS
APPLYING TO WORLD PROGRESS WITH REGARD
TO THEIR PUBLICITY

Enlightenment of the people is the public instruction of the people in its duties and rights vis-à-vis the state to which they belong. Since only natural rights and rights arising out of the common human understanding are concerned here, then the natural heralds and expositors of these among the people are not officially appointed by the state but are free professors of law, that is philosophers who, precisely because this freedom is allowed to them, are objectionable to the state, which always desires to rule alone; and they are decried, under the name of *enlighteners*, as persons dangerous to the state, although their voice is not addressed *confidentially* to the people (as the people take scarcely any or no notice at all of it and of their writings) but is addressed *respectfully* to the state; and they implore the state to take to heart that need which is felt to be legitimate. This can happen by no other means than that of publicity in the event that an entire people cares to bring forward its grievances (*gravamen*). Thus the *prohibition* of publicity impedes the progress of a people toward improvement, even in that which applies to the least of its claims, namely its simple, natural right.

Another disguise, which is easily penetrated indeed, but is one to which a nation, nevertheless, is legally committed, is that pertaining to the true nature of its constitution. It would be an insult to its majesty to say of the British nation that it is an *unlimited monarchy*: some rather maintain that a constitution *limiting* the will of the monarch through the two Houses of Parliament, acting as representatives of the people, is supposed to exist; and yet everyone knows perfectly well that the monarch's influence on these representatives is so great and so certain that nothing is resolved by the Houses except what he wills and purposes through his

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minister. The latter then probably even proposes resolutions in connection with which he knows that he will be contradicted, and even arranges it that way (for example, with regard to slave-trade) in order to provide a fictitious proof of the freedom of Parliament. — This representation of the nature of the case has something delusive about it so that the true constitution, faithful to law, is no longer sought at all; for a person imagines he has found it in an example already at hand, and a false publicity deceives the people with the illusion of a *limited monarchy** in power by a law which issues from them, while their representatives, won over by bribery, have secretly subjected them to an *absolute monarchy*.

∴

7:91

The idea of a constitution in harmony with the natural right of human beings, one namely in which the citizens obedient to the law, besides being united, ought also to be legislative, lies at the basis of all political forms; and the body politic which, conceived in conformity to it by virtue of pure concepts of reason, signifies a Platonic *ideal (respublica noumenon)*, is not an empty figment of the brain, but rather the eternal norm for all civil organization in general, and averts all war. A civil society organized conformably to this ideal is the representation of it in agreement with the laws of freedom by means of an example in our experience (*respublica phaenomenon*) and can be acquired only painfully, after multifarious hostilities and wars; but its constitution, once won on a large scale, is qualified as the best among all others to banish war, the destroyer of everything good. Consequently, it is a duty to enter into such a system of government, but it is provisionally the duty of the monarchs, if they rule *as autocrats*, to govern in a *republican* (not democratic) way, that is, to treat people according to principles⁷ which are commensurate with the spirit of laws of freedom (as a nation with mature understanding would prescribe them for itself), although they would not be literally canvassed for their consent.

* A cause, the nature of which one does directly understand, makes itself known through the effect which unfailingly attaches to it. — What is an *absolute monarch*? He is one at whose command, if he says, "war is necessary," a state of war immediately exists. — What is a *limited monarch*, on the other hand? He who must first consult the people as to whether war is or is not to be; and the people say, "there is to be no war," so there is no war. For war is a situation in which *all* political power must be at the disposal of the sovereign. Now the British monarch has conducted wars aplenty without seeking the consent for them. Therefore, this king is an absolute monarch who ought not to be one, of course, according to the constitution; but he is always able to bypass it because precisely through those political powers, namely, that he has it in his power to dispense all appointments and posts, he can consider assured the assent of the representatives of the people. In order to succeed, however, this system of bribery must certainly not be publicized. Hence it remains under the highly transparent veil of secrecy.

⁷ *Principien*

9.

WHAT PROFIT WILL PROGRESS TOWARD THE
BETTER YIELD HUMANITY?

Not an ever-growing quantity of *morality* with regard to intention, but an increase of the products of *legality* in dutiful actions whatever their motives.² That is, the profit (result) of the human being's striving toward the better can be assumed to reside alone in the good *deeds* of human beings, which will become better and better and more and more numerous; it resides alone in phenomena constituting the moral state of the human race. — For we have only *empirical* data (experiences) upon which we are founding this prediction, namely, the physical cause of our actions as these actually occur as phenomena; and not the moral cause — the only one which can be established purely a priori — which contains the concept of duty with respect to what ought to happen.

Gradually violence on the part of the powers will diminish and obedience to the laws will increase. There will arise in the body politic perhaps more charity and less strife in lawsuits, more reliability in keeping one's word, etc., partly out of love of honor, partly out of well-understood self-interest. And eventually this will also extend to nations in their external relations toward one another up to the realization of the cosmopolitan society, without the moral foundation in humanity having to be enlarged in the least; for that, a kind of new creation (supernatural influence) would be necessary. — For we must also not hope for too much from human beings in their progress toward the better lest we fall prey with good reason to the mockery of the politician who would willingly take the hope of the human being as the dreaming of an overstressed mind.*

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10.

IN WHAT ORDER ALONE CAN PROGRESS
TOWARD THE BETTER BE EXPECTED?

The answer is: not by the movement of things *from bottom to top*, but *from top to bottom*. — To expect not simply to train good citizens but good human

* It is sweet, however, to imagine constitutions corresponding to the requirements of reason (particularly in a legal sense), but rash to propose them and culpable to incite the populace to abolish what presently exists.

Plato's *Atlantica*, More's *Utopia*, Harrington's *Oceana* and Allais's *Severambia*⁴³ have been successively brought on the scene, but have never so much as been tried (Cromwell's abortive monster of a despotic republic excepted). — The same goes for political creations as for the creation of the world; no human was present there, nor could he have been present at such an event, since he must have been his own creator otherwise. However late it may be, to hope someday for the consummation of a political product, as it is envisaged here, is a sweet dream; but that it is being perpetually approached is not only *thinkable*, but, so far as it is compatible with the moral law, an *obligation*, not of the citizens, but of the sovereign.

² *Triebfeder*

7:93 beings who can improve and take care of themselves; to expect that this will eventually happen by means of education of youth in the home, then in schools on both the lowest and highest level, in intellectual and moral culture fortified by religious doctrine – that is desirable, but its success is hardly to be hoped for. For while the people feel that the costs for education of their youth ought to be borne, not by them, but by the state, the state for its part has no money left (as Büsching complains)⁴⁴ for the salaries of its teachers who are capable and zealously devoted to their spheres of duty, since it uses all the money for war. Rather, the whole mechanism of this education has no coherence if it is not designed in agreement with a well-weighed plan of the sovereign power, put into play according to the purpose of this plan, and steadily maintained therein; to this end it might well behoove the state likewise to reform itself from time to time and, attempting evolution instead of revolution, progress perpetually toward the better. Nevertheless, since they are also *human beings* who must effect this education, consequently such beings who themselves have to be trained for that purpose, then, considering this infirmity of human nature as subject to the contingency of events which favor such an effect, the hope for its progress is to be expected only on the condition of a wisdom from above (which bears the name of providence if it is invisible to us); but for that which can be expected and exacted from *human beings* in this area toward the advancement of this aim, we can anticipate only a negative wisdom, namely, that they will see themselves compelled to render the greatest obstacle to morality – that is to say *war* which constantly retards this advancement – firstly by degrees more humane and then rarer, and finally to renounce offensive war altogether, in order to enter upon a constitution which by its nature and without loss of power is founded on genuine principles of right, and which can persistently progress toward the better.

CONCLUSION

7:94 A doctor who consoled his patients from one day to the next with hopes of a speedy convalescence, pledging to one that his pulse beat better, to another an improvement in his stool, to a third the same regarding his perspiration, etc., received a visit from one of his friends. “How’s your illness, my friend,” was his first question. “How should it be? *I’m dying of improvement, pure and simple!*” – I blame no one when, considering the ills of the state, he begins to despair of the health of humanity and its progress toward the better; but I would rely on the heroic remedy which Hume prescribes and which would effect a quick cure. “If, at the present time,” he says, “I see the nations on the point of war with one another, it is as if I were seeing two besotted fellows beating each other about with cudgels in a china shop. For not only do they have to recover slowly from the bruises

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they administered to each other, but afterwards they must pay for the damages that they have done."⁴⁵ *Sero sapiunt Phryges.*^a However, the painful consequences of the present war can compel the political prophet to confess a very imminent turn of humanity toward the better that is even now in prospect.

^a The Phrygians are wise too late (Cicero, *Ad familiam* 7:16).