

On 'Enlightened' Tolerance in Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?

Immanuel Kant's »Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?« and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Ringparabel in »Nathan der Weise«

One of the key ideas of the Enlightenment (Aufklärung) was tolerance. Tolerance not in the previous sense of humouring the believers that one 'knows' to be mislead (ie. Mitleid = sympathy), but rather in having the strength to think rationally (or critically) and thereby doubt one's own beliefs and see the possibility of truth in others' (ie. Ehrfurcht = respect)1.

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In keeping with the principles of the Enlightenment, Lessing has Nathan use logical arguments to persuade Saladin - or rather the audience - of the rationality of tolerance. The main thrust of the argument is the element of doubt associated with the history of each religion:

1 Denn gründen alle sich nicht auf Geschichte? [...] Und / Geschichte muß doch wohl allein auf Treu / und Glauben angenommen werden? (p. 72, l. 26-29) Lessing maintains that the report of a proof is not itself a proof2. This is extended to show that by behaving as if (as in Hans Vaihinger's »Philosophie des Als-Ob« (1911)3) one's religion were the true one - which in this context would include being tolerant - one can demonstrate the validity of that religion, so that any religion which fits the model of 'doing good' is potentially the (or a) true religion.

2 This is similar to Lessing's view in Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts where he states that: Nein; sie wird kommen, sie wird gewiß kommen, die Zeit der Vollendung, da der Mensch, je überzeugter sein Verstand einer immer bessern Zukunft sich fühlt, von dieser Zukunft gleichwohl Bewegungsgründe zu seinen Handlungen zu erborgen, nicht nötig haben wird; da er das Gute tun wird, weil es das Gute ist, nicht weil willkürliche Belohnungen darauf gesetzt sind, die seinen flatterhaften Blick ehemals bloß heften und stärken sollten, die innern bessern Belohnungen desselben zu erkennen5.

In this more pure light we may now see the message in Nathan as partially corrupted in that there is still an 'external' reward (or one that is additional to the feeling of satisfaction) for behaving as if one's religion is the true one. If this ideal is contrasted with Kant's thoughts, it can be seen that Kant's 'public duty of the individual' corresponds most closely to Lessing's 'humanitarian compulsion'.

To digress briefly (to demonstrate relevance to modern times and risking 'topicality'), one notes that the reason most often bandied about in the press (and hence, apparently, in parliament) to condemn the "racist views" of Ms. Hanson is that it is damaging our trade with Asia. That is, to put it more crudely (but no less accurately), her statements are costing us money. The reader may draw their own conclusions, but one would emphasise that Lessing and Kant would be expected to object for more 'profound' (which implies less material) reasons.

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1 Ernst Cassirer; Die Idee der Religion bei Lessing und Mendelssohn; [Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums / Yale University Press]; Berlin; 1929; pp. 22-41 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); Lessings »N.d.W.«; Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft; Darmstadt; 1984; p. 107.

2 G.E.L.; Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft; 1777 cited from: G.E.L. (Afterword by Helmut Thielicke); Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts und andere Schriften; Reclam; Stuttgart; 1967; pp. 31-38 in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); Erläuterungen und Dokumente G.E.L. N.d.W.; Philipp Reclam; Stuttgart; 1972; p. 91.

3 Peter Demetz; G.E.L.: N.d.W. / Lessings »N.d.W.«: Wirklichkeiten und Wirklichkeit; Ullstein; Frankfurt a.M.; 1966; pp. 121-158 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 211. and also Peter Demetz; G.E.L.: N.d.W. - Dichtung und Wirklichkeit; Ullstein; Frankfurt a.M.; 1966; p. 152.

4 Hans Leisegang; Lessings Weltanschauung / »N.d.W.«; Felix Meiner; Leipzig; 1931; pp. 140-158 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 130.

5 G.E.L.; Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts; 1780; § 85 cited from: G.E.L. (Helmut Thielicke); op. cit.; 1965 [sic!] in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); op. cit.; p. 155.

How effective is the Ring Parable in Nathan? As a dramatic play without the conveniences of 'alienation' ('Verfremdung') and the like pioneered by Brecht, it is impossible for Lessing to develop a complete philosophy. However we can be sure that Lessing does actually believe in the tolerance celebrated in his "Lehrgedicht"6 or "Lehrfabel"7: educational poem / prose / fable.

3 Nathans Gesinnung gegen alle positive Religion ist von jeher die meinige gewesen. Aber hier ist nicht der Ort, sie zu rechtfertigen8.

and to such an extent that he is willing to sacrifice some part of its dramatic effectiveness:

4 Wenn man endlich sagen wird, daß ein Stück von so eigner Tendenz nicht reich genug an eigner Schönheit sei: - so werde ich schweigen, aber mich nicht schämen9.

With that disclaimer in mind, there are certainly some problems with the Ring Parable / Nathan. An important point to be raised is how convincing Nathan is, especially as a Jew. Some critics have stated that Nathan is not at all representative of the Jewish religion ("[er ist] gar kein Jude, [...] Nathans unabhängige deistische Religion"10). This is understandable if it is interpreted as meaning that Lessing wanted him to personify the principles of the Enlightenment: a disciple of the so-called 'Vernunftreligion'11 (which would be the fourth 'true' ring). Fittbogen analyses Nathan's religion: religion of reason

5 Die Religion ist ihm [Nathan] weder Lehre wie der Orthodoxy, noch Wissen wie dem Deismus, noch Gut-Handeln wie der Aufklärung, Religion ist ihm Gesinnung [-mind-set]. Damit befreit er sie von allem Intellektuellismus (dogmatischer und philosophischer Art) und Moralismus und gibt sie sich selbst wieder12.

This analysis seems a little simplified, as elements of (eg.) Enlightened behaviour are to be found in Nathan. There are, of course, other conflicting interpretations.

One notes that Kröger finds that Nathan does not personify the (stereotypical) merchant13 (an occupation that was associated with Jews): in fact he finds that money in general is rather negatively depicted14 (as in Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts, § 85), which is not an issue for Kant. Nathan also forgoes interest on the loan (p. 75, l. 13-26). The upbringing of the human race. A further interpretation has Nathan as a 'Märchenfigur'15. In this case there is a danger that the audience may not see the principles as applying to their everyday life, but only to the special 'make-believe' world of Nathan. This problem is repeated in the obvious distance between the audience and the happenings of the Ring Parable: "vor grauen Jahren [...] in Osten," (p. 70, l. 30). And again in Kant's essay, which the 'unphilosophical' may see as irrelevant - if they saw it at all (although Kemp states that Kant was directing it at them16).

before dark years [...] in the East

6 Cz [Johann Erich Biester] in: Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek; Anhang zum 37. bis 52. Bande, 3. Abt., 3. Nachtr., pp. 1713-25 cited from: Julius W. Braun; Lessing im Urtheile seiner Zeitgenossen. Zeitungen aus den Jahren 1747-1781; Berlin; 1884-97; Volume 3, pp. 108-118 in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); op. cit.; p. 119.

7 Germaine de Staël; Über Deutschland; 1813 cited from: Germaine de Staël (translated and edited by Robert Habs, introduction by Sigrid Metken); Über Deutschland; Reclam; Stuttgart; 1962; p. 209 in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); op. cit.; p. 135.

8 G.E.L.; [Entwürfe zu einer Vorrede]; cited from: G.E.L. / Petersen and Waldemar von Olshausen (eds.); Lessings Werke; [1925-35]; Volume 2, pp. 313f. in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); op. cit.; p. 113.

9 G.E.L.; Vorrede; cited from: G.E.L. / Julius Petersen and Waldemar von Olshausen (eds.); op. cit.; pp. 313f. in: Peter von Düffel (ed.); op. cit.; p. 113.

10 Stuart Atkins (translated by Wenzel Peters); "The Parable of the Rings in Lessing's »N.d.W.«"; The Germanic Review; XXVI, No. 1 [sic! James E. Person, Jr. (ed.); (see footnote 17) also contains an excerpt of Atkins (on pp. 95-98), but gives the source rather as No. 4], pp. 259-267 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 165.

11 Hans Leisegang; op. cit. in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; pp. 130f..

12 Gottfried Fittbogen; Lessings Religion; Mayer & Müller; Leipzig; 1923; pp. 148-182 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 93.

13 Wolfgang Kröger; Lessings »N.d.W.« Ein toter Klassiker?; R. Oldenbourg; München; 1980; p. 81.

14 Wolfgang Kröger; op. cit.; p. 81.

15 Wolfgang Kröger; op. cit.; p. 31.

16 John Kemp; The Philosophy of Kant; Oxford University Press; Oxford; 1968; pp. 123-26 in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); I.K.; Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism; Gale Research; Detroit; 1990; p. 231.

Note: extended translations on final page.

He is no Jew at all [...] Nathan's independent deistic religion

fairy-tale character

Lewes gave a more disagreeable interpretation (1845):

Nathan [...] is a Jew only in name [...] Lessing is constantly applauded for having chosen one of the most exclusive and fiercely bigoted of all races, as the exemplar of tolerance, but this is surely either inconsistent or erroneous. Nathan is an exemplar of tolerance: but assuredly his tolerance is not that of a Jew¹⁷.

Primer's interpretation (1894) was similarly biased:

[...] and has he [Lessing] not made it evident in his *Education of the Human Race* which of the three [religions] he considers highest [implying Christianity]? And do we not know which produces the best fruits? Let modern civilisation answer those who still doubt. [...] "[...] For Christ himself held the Good Samaritan as an example [...] but he did not wish to put Samaritanism above Judaism for all that." (Pabst, p. 148) [...] But neither Nathan nor [...] represents at all his religion; but one is forced to believe that Lessing had just the opposite in view [...]¹⁸

This brings to mind the phrase: there are none so blind as those who will not see (ie. do not want to). Lessing's lesson that man is not able to judge one's fellow man – as expressed by Saladin, horrified at the thought that he would have to decide which (if any) is the 'true' ring (or, by implication, religion) "Ich staub? Ich nichts? / O Gott!" (p. 74, l. 36–37) – was been lost on Primer. Lewes' conclusion that Nathan is not a 'typical' Jew, may surely mean that all the fine principles of tolerance are useless – being tolerant of those you like is no tolerance at all. The most favourable reading of Lewes would be to only be tolerant of those that are tolerant to you.

Digressing for a moment, this too serves no purpose, as it supports intolerance of the **apparently** intolerant, which **breeds** intolerance (as it were). The point of which is to reinforce the possibility of misinterpreting Lessing's work, compared to Kant's work, in which he can make categorical, unequivocal statements (of course the reader is not compelled, simply by reading such a statement, to come around to Kant's way of thinking, but at least it there is no possibility of it supporting an opposite view). Note further that Kant would disagree with this 'reason' for intolerance, as it cannot be **constructively** made into a 'universal principle'¹⁹.

This brings into doubt the application of the espoused principles. It is all well and good to now be tolerant of an enlightened Jew like Nathan (if the audience may even be convinced that such Jews exist!), but what of other Jews? Or what of other 'lesser' (ie. minority) religions? Or even atheists? Or discrimination based on something other than religion?

Lessing wants the ring to be seen as only a symbol of the real achievement, namely that of having a humanitarian disposition (**towards** others, as seen by the love borne for that person by others)²⁰. Lessing wants to show that "men are good or bad independent of their faith,"²¹ and thus they should be judged – if at all – on their own merits (or lack thereof), and not on the religion (or society, et cetera) that they do (or do not) belong to.

It is well known that Lessing based his Parable of the Rings in the middle (3. Aufzug, 7. Auftritt) of *Nathan der Weise* on that found in Giovanni Boccaccio's (1348–53) *Decamerone* (1st day, III novella)²².

One change that Lessing has made is that in the Boccaccio's version the sultan Saladin rewards Nathan's cunning in avoiding giving an answer to the question. That is he recognises and

¹⁷ George Henry Lewes; *Lessing; The Edinburgh Review*; Vol. LXXXII, No. CLXVI; October, 1845; p. 466 in: James E. Person, Jr. (ed.); *G.E.L.; Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*; Gale Research; Detroit; 1988; Vol. 8, p. 67.

¹⁸ Sylvester Primer (Introduction and notes) / *G.E.L.; Lessing: N.d.W.*; D. C. Heath; Boston; 1894; pp. xvii–xviii.

¹⁹ Hans Siegbert Reiss; *Kant – Political Writings*, [2nd edn.]; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1991; pp. 22f. and also Hans Reiss; [...]; 1970 in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; pp. 232f.

²⁰ Gottfried Fittbogen; op. cit. in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 72.

²¹ Robert Waller Deering; *Lessing's 'Nathan the Wise'; The Chautauquan*; Vol. XXXIX, No. 5; February, 1902; p. 528 in: James E. Person, Jr. (ed.); op. cit.; p. 79.

²² G.E.L. / Joachim Bach (ed.); *G.E.L. >N.d.W.< mit Materialien*; Ernst Klett; Stuttgart; 1985; pp. 159–161. Also given as 1349–52 in: Wolfgang Kröger; op. cit.; p. 54.

respects Nathan's guile. However Lessing's Saladin appears to finally see the truth in Nathan's words, and so rewards Nathan's wisdom, that is his ability to see to the heart of the matter^{23, 24}, and in fact appreciates the truth in Nathan's argument, rather than being merely enchanted: "Der Mann hat Recht" (p. 73, l. 3). This change emphasises the validity of Nathan's argument, and further attacks Jewish stereotypes (or perhaps more accurately caricatures).

It is also a more favourable depiction of Saladin, who now sees the meaning rather than the outer artifice. As such he seems a candidate for a ruler in the Kantian sense, as is discussed below.

Kant's essay on the nature of Enlightenment expounds Kant's views on the ideal behaviour of both the populace and the ruler (whatever form that may be). One of the key character traits that both should possess is tolerance (eg. pp. 15f.).

The populace is directed to have courage. In the case examined here that may be interpreted as having the strength to speak out against intolerance. This implies that, as in *Nathan*, intolerance and discrimination are founded on inherently false premises. Thus, when the criticism is voiced, the truth of the criticism will be recognised. This optimistic view of humanity's rationality is characteristic of Enlightenment thought (although Atkins thinks that this was lost by this time²⁵).

One criticism that could – perhaps unfairly – be leveled at Kant is that he concentrates his attentions on the already (at least somewhat) empowered classes – he "does not at all consider the question of economic equality"²⁶ – rather than being a true egalitarian. This may be seen as unfair in that Kant was a prisoner of his time (as supported by Kemp²⁷) – just as we all are – and that he may not have seen a practical way to involve such lower classes in decision making.

Indeed he rather felt that they were too dependent on their employers (or masters) to make sufficiently unbiased decisions. Specifically Kant encourages the 'Gelehrter' (p. 11) while speaking disparagingly of the entire 'fair sex' (p. 9). Lessing's Nathan does fit into this category of an educated man, but furthermore his wealth makes him independent²⁸ – one of Kant's 'prerequisites'.

It is only the learned who may criticise social institutions in Kant's system, and only then in the so-called public use, where they write to the readership at large. This is contrasted with the private use, where they must perform their duty (as laid out by their superiors) obediently and without question. The restriction to the learned (or 'active citizens'²⁹) was seen logically by Kant not as an elitist restriction but rather a necessary restriction, as even if the working classes (or rather 'passive citizens'³⁰) were able to disseminate their view, it would be too biased, and they were not well-enough informed. However as one goal of the time was universal education, this may have been (or be) seen as only a temporary problem.

The only other restriction that Kant would make is that "all views must be tolerated provided that they are views which involve the toleration of the views of others." (So for example expressing racist views would be prohibited.)

Comparing Kant's system with Lessing's actual experience shows that Lessing's rational attacks on the institution of the Christian church and Bible (emphatically not attacks on Christianity

²³ Klaus Bohnen; [*Einleitung*]; Kopenhagen/Aalborg; 1983 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 27.

²⁴ Hans Leisegang; op. cit. in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 129.

²⁵ Stuart Atkins (Wenzel Peters); op. cit. in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 166.

²⁶ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 26. and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 234.

²⁷ John Kemp; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 231.

²⁸ Wolfgang Kröger; op. cit.; p. 30.

²⁹ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 27. and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 234.

³⁰ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 27. and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 234.

itself^{31,32}, see also Lessing's *Axiomata*) were an appropriate and 'legitimate' public expression. Despite that he was still banned from further such writings, which led to the thinly disguised message in Nathan. As noted above though, however clearly expressed the message may be, it is still open to misinterpretation. One aspect of Lessing's philosophy that is not identical to Kant's is that while Lessing was happy to berate the Church, he repeatedly insists that he was not attacking the Christian religion itself - which could be because he would have found this intolerant (actually it is probable that Lessing genuinely admired the principles of Christian religion: but his denials seem overly strenuous). However one would expect Kant to have fewer qualms with attacks on religion itself, provided these were made 'in the public interest'.

It is particularly interesting and informative to examine Kant's proposed ruler. Reiss characterises Kant's views on this subject as:

[...] not without the occasional contradiction, as might be expected from a philosopher wrestling with a problem which he had not solved entirely to his satisfaction³³.

Kant actually makes an oblique reference to the best rôle-model of his time, namely Friedrich II. of Prussia (pp. 11, 58), similarly to the way Lessing presents Saladin - that is as the most enlightened (ie. tolerant) ruler of the time, but still capable of improvement³⁴. However one could foresee problems arising en masse if it should happen to pass that the ruler were not 'accommodating' enough to fit neatly into Kant's described rôle, but rather chose to wield his power 'intolerantly' as it were. A simple case is to consider the outcome had Saladin dismissed Nathan's request to tell the parable: "Erlaubst du wohl, dir ein Geschichtchen zu / Erzählen?" (p. 70, l. 21-22).

↳ Would you allow me to tell you a little story?

The most important point that should be raised is the case where the ruler is 'inconsiderate' enough to completely ignore Kant's system, and on the contrary seeks to stamp out public criticism by decree. Were an instance of intolerance to be commanded by the superior, there would be no way to avoid carrying it out. Furthermore Kant held the case against rebellion to be unambiguous as it destroys the order that Kant believed was necessary for harmony and 'reasonable' freedoms (although he seemed to view the French revolution favourably)³⁵. What is the Kantian man to do? He cannot disobey a direct command not to criticise in any form. But can he allow himself to undertake intolerant actions in his private office without at least voicing criticism as a public member of society? It seems that Kant's whole system relies on the benevolence of the ruler. Particularly so as he is also opposed to revolution (pp. 10f.). And Kant's edict to have courage to tell the truth could be easily outweighed by a threat to the personal security of the dissidents (in most cases). Indeed Kant assumes that these criticisms could even be promulgated at all.

Strangely enough there Kant experienced an example of this. In the shadow of the French Revolution Prussian authorities feared a similar fate to their French counterparts, and wished to avoid this by silencing perceived admirers of the Revolution. Thus it came to pass that Kant received a "secret letter from King Friedrich Wilhelm II threatening him with unpleasant

³¹ G.E.L.: 1777 cited from: G.E.L. / Herbert G. Göpfert et al. (eds.); *G.E.L.: Werke*; Carl Hanser; München; 1979; Vol. 7 [Theologiekritische Schriften I und II], pp. 457-459 in: G.E.L. / Joachim Bach (ed.); op. cit.; p. 147.
³² G.E.L. / Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker (eds.); *G. E. Lessings Sämtliche Schriften*, [3. Aufl.]; Stuttgart; 1886-1924; Vol. XIII, p. 110 cited from: Helmut Göbel; *Bild und Sprache bei Lessing / Die Bildlichkeit im >Nathan<*; Wilhelm Fink; München; 1971; pp. 154-195 in: Klaus Bohnen (ed.); op. cit.; p. 255.
³³ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 24 and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 233.
³⁴ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 25 and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 233.
³⁵ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 30. and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 235.

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consequences if he did not desist from ridiculing the church." Kant dutifully obeyed his sovereign, but when Friedrich II died in 1797 Kant felt free to resume his criticism³⁶. Just as Lessing, Kant depends on man's natural desire to 'do the right thing' simply because it is the right thing. One difference is that Kant labels it a duty - which cannot be relinquished³⁷. Whether or not such a desire exists in all men, some men or no man cannot be said; it can only be said that both Kant and Lessing believed that it either existed (and still exists) or would exist. It could cautiously be suggested that Kant would not have been in complete agreement with Lessing's proposed motivation for the good deeds, as expressed in *Nathan*: that good deeds are done **in order** to please God (and one's fellow man). Kant argues (elsewhere) that:

[...] we do not need religion to act morally; the categorical imperative is enough. Whatever is done merely to please god is false virtue. Yet we need the idea of God to make the concept of moral perfection thinkable³⁸.

On the other hand one could read Lessing as saying that the pleasing of God (and one's fellow man) is only the **evidence** of the good deeds. This leads on to the dilemma of whether to give unwanted assistance.

Demetz sees an unusual from of 'duty' in *Nathan*, in that the father seems to him to be rather passively **compelled** to love his sons (due to their loyalty; see p. 71, l. 15, "folglich")³⁹.

↳ consequently

Kant states that he has emphasised religious tolerance because the rulers have no interest in controlling the arts and sciences. Whether or not that was the case at the time of writing, it is certainly no longer the case now, as it seems that a political meaning can be read into almost any work of art or scientific endeavour, which the unscrupulous ruler will unflinchingly seek to manipulate to his own ends. But one must remember not to be overly critical of a man for failing to divine the future.

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Tolerance is an ideal that both Lessing and Kant strove for, and yet it is not yet achieved. What purpose then did their literature serve? Merely to rouse awareness of intolerance? Assuredly not: both pieces examined here were designed with the intention of effecting an increase in the public's tolerance. And indeed, that being their purpose, whether they have brought about 'sufficient' change or not, they are still among the best efforts to do so.

Schritt für Schritt; sehr gute Bearbeitung des Sekundärmaterials; gute Fragestellung; gute Strukturierung 34/40

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³⁶ John D. Simons; *I.K.*; in: Hardin and Schweitzer (eds.); [DLB = Dictionary of Literary Biography] *German Writers in the Age of Goethe: Sturm und Drang to Classicism*; Gale Research; Detroit; 1990; Vol. 94, p. 117.
³⁷ Hans Siegbert Reiss; op. cit.; p. 27. and also Hans Reiss; op. cit. in: Janet Mullane and Laurie Sherman (eds.); op. cit.; p. 234.
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Translations from the Creerman.

- ① Because aren't they all based on history? [...] And / history must surely be accepted based on faith, trust / and belief alone?
- ② No; it will come, it will certainly come, the time of completion, because mankind, the more convinced of a better future he feels, ~~he~~ nonetheless won't find it necessary to hide the moving reasons for his actions from this future; because he will do good, because it is good, not because arbitrary rewards are assigned to them, which are supposed to steady and strengthen mankind's formerly fluttering gaze, to recognise the inner rewards for those same actions.
- ③ Nathan's attitude towards all 'positive' religions has always been mine. However this is not the place to justify them.
- ④ If someone eventually says, that such a tolerant work of literature was not sufficiently beautiful enough in itself: - then I would be silent, but not ashamed.
- ⑤ For him [Nathan] religion is neither teaching as in the orthodoxy, nor knowledge as in deism, nor good behaviour, religion is for him attitude. With that he frees them from all intellectualism (of a dogmatic and philosophical nature) and moralism and restores them to themselves.