

# Moral Faith and Providence

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I have been coming to the Wheaton philosophy conference for many years, initially from a secular campus, where I didn't know any Christian philosophers. It was extraordinary to feel that there was a common enterprise with this group of people that I was beginning to belong to. Especially when the sessions were introduced by someone with an English accent rather like my own. Then I went to Calvin, and have become more and more aware of the extent of this enterprise, and grateful for the support and criticism of my colleagues. The common project works best when your colleagues see the errors in your work, and tell you about them. It is true that as keynote speaker, I can get away with talking at length, without having some clever person standing up after I have finished, ready and eager to expose my errors. This is reassuring. But I know that in the long run I will be held accountable if my work is on the wrong track, just because there is this common project to which it belongs.

I am going to talk to you today and tomorrow about moral faith. Today the subject is faith in Providence. Tomorrow it is faith that we can be morally good people. I will start today by making three introductory points about the shape of morality as a whole, as this has been described in modern moral philosophy. I will then try to reply to the objection that moral faith is inconsistent with a pure commitment to morality. The main substance of the talk will be a defence of the claim that morality requires the faith that being morally good is consistent with being happy.

When I look at the shape of morality as this is presented by the great moral theorists of modernity, starting (let us say) with Kant, I am struck by a certain repeating pattern. This is the pattern of what I have called 'the moral gap', and I have put this on the handout. I find this in Kant, and in the theorists of the present who descend from him, such as my father R.M. Hare, but also, for example, Rawls and Brandt and Habermas. The moral gap is a gap between the moral demand, and our capacities to meet this demand. What is the moral demand? How good do we have to be? At least, morality demands of us that we be impartial; especially, that we not give our own interests more weight just because they are ours. But the moral capacities we find ourselves with, our initial equipment (so to speak) seems to be radically unequal to this task. There is also another feature which I find constantly repeated by the theorists of morality. They postulate a being who could exist, even if it doesn't, who is able to live by the demand, and whose prescriptions about how we should live are authoritative for us. This postulated being is given many different names and descriptions. The Archangel, for example, in my father's theory, or the Ideal Observer in Brandt, or the person behind the veil of ignorance in Rawls, or the full participant in discourse in Habermas. What is typical of all these postulated beings, however, is that they are without the usual human limitations on their moral capacity. The first point I want to make is that this pattern needs explanation. Why should morality be presented as having this shape, rather than what we might otherwise have expected - a purely human institution, tied to our human conditions of limitation? I think the overwhelmingly plausible answer is that this gap-shape is a remnant, a relic. It is the remains of a traditional view, according to which human beings are subordinate to divine beings or a divine being, who is without their limitations and whose prescriptions about their lives they are supposed to obey.

I do not want at this point to limit this traditional view to Christianity, or even to the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. There is already in Aristotle the description of a gap-shaped morality. The best life, he tells us, would be superior to the human level, but we ought not to follow the proverb writers, and 'think human, since (we) are human, or think mortal, since (we) are mortal.'

Rather, as far as we can, we ought to be immortal.

The second point I want to make by way of introduction is that the description of the life in this moral gap, without anything added to it, is incoherent. This is because of another feature of morality which is to be found in Kant and his descendants, and in the traditional view as well. This feature can be expressed succinctly as the view that 'ought' implies 'can'. If it is the case that you ought to do something, then it must be the case that you can do it. Or, to put that the other way round, if it is not the case that you can do it, then it is not the case that you ought to. To see the appeal of this principle, consider the case of the eighteen-month-old child, sitting in her high-chair, knocking over her milk. She does this repeatedly, not just once. She knocks it over, the top comes off, I mop it up and give her a refill. She knocks it over again, and I mop it up. At some point or other, depending on my level of patience, I get exasperated. 'If you knock it over one more time', I say, 'you are going to be punished.' But if I say this, I am in the wrong. Why? Because she is not knocking over her milk deliberately in order to infuriate me. Rather, she does not have the motor co-ordination yet to control her arms and legs. It is a cardinal principle of child-rearing that you should only hold children accountable to standards that they are able to reach. And another way to put that is to say that 'ought' implies 'can'. But then if our capacities are really inadequate to the moral demand, it is not the case that we ought to live by it. It is incoherent to put us under a demand we cannot reach.

Now Christianity, and this is my third point, has a supplement to the gap-picture of morality. The gap-picture has three components; first, the demand, second our capacities, and third the at least possible holy being. What Christianity adds is that the third part of this picture (namely the at least possible holy being) intervenes in human affairs so as to change the second part of this picture (namely our capacities) so that they become adequate to the first part of the picture (namely the moral demand). Just how God is supposed to do this is the topic of tomorrow's lecture. My third point today is that this feature of Christianity has completely dropped out of the professional literature in moral theory. If you looked up under atonement, for example, in the philosophers' index for the last twenty years, it would be slim pickings indeed. But this means that contemporary moral philosophy is faced with the threat of the incoherence I have just described. It has responded to this threat in essentially three ways, which I have put on the handout.

First, there are philosophers who exaggerate our initial capacity so that it becomes adequate to the demand, which is held constant. One conspicuous example is the utilitarian theorists who hold that if we were only vividly aware of the effects of our actions on other people, we would tend to do what morality requires. It is thus ignorance which holds us back, not any radical evil of the will. Such theorists need to explain how it is that people who know perfectly well how much they are harming the people affected by their actions nevertheless persist in the most horrifying contempt and cruelty.

The second strategy is to hold our capacities constant, and adjust the demand downwards in order to meet it. This is typical of the type of moral theory we can call 'particularist'. There are some types of feminist ethical theory which are like this, though there are other types which are not. Extreme particularist theories diminish the moral demand by saying that we are not, after all, required to be impartial. Our moral obligations, on these theories, are embedded within the special relations we have, and do not extend beyond these. We do not, for example, have moral obligations to the starving in Africa. This makes the moral demand much closer to our natural tendency to prefer those close to us. But theorists of this kind have to explain our perception that we do have these moral obligations outside our special relations, and that reducing the moral demand in this way would have calamitous moral consequences.

The third strategy is to hold both the demand and our capacities constant, and then to try to find some substitute for divine assistance in bridging the resultant gap. One conspicuous example here is that type of evolutionary ethics, which holds that altruism has adaptive value for human beings, so that even though we do have the natural tendency towards selfishness, there is this force of natural selection pulling us despite ourselves towards the demands of morality. Here natural selection is most helpfully seen, I think, as a substitute for divine assistance. It is in a sense an ingredient of our natural capacities, but it operates beyond our conscious control, as a force external to us, changing what we are capable of on our own. Proponents of evolutionary ethics have to explain just how the quest for reproductive advantage leads to morally good lives.

So there is a map of contemporary moral theory. The reason I needed to go through it as an introduction to the notion of moral faith is that this map explains what moral faith is needed for. A moral agent cannot coherently commit herself to morality unless she believes that she can lead a morally good life. If she will not either exaggerate her capacities or reduce the demand, then she will be in the moral gap. This means that because of the principle that 'ought' implies 'can', she needs to believe either in God's assistance, as in the traditional view, or in some substitute for this assistance. If I could show that there is no successful substitute, then I would have shown the necessity for belief in God's assistance. I do not claim to have done that, though I have in my book argued against three conspicuous contemporary candidates for this substitution, including the type of evolutionary ethics I mentioned.

There are two kinds of moral faith which Kant distinguished. They are on the handout. This is not a talk about Kant, but I will be retracing some of his steps and I want to give him credit. Last time I spoke at this conference, I gave a historical talk about where I think Kant was right in this area and where I think he was wrong. I think Kant is right that a moral agent needs the following two kinds of moral faith. First, she needs to believe that she can, over the course of her life as a whole, will what is morally good; and second she needs to believe that she does not have to do what is morally bad in order to be happy. First she has to believe that her capacities have been transformed inside, so to speak. Second she has to believe that the world outside is the kind of place in which happiness is consistent with a morally good life. Tomorrow I will say more about the kind of internal transformation which is the object of the first kind of faith, faith in the possibility of virtue. Today I will be talking about the second kind of moral faith, faith in Providence.

Now before discussing why a moral agent has to believe that being morally good is consistent with being happy, I want to mention an objection to the very idea of faith in Providence. Is not moral duty supposed to be a sufficient end all by itself, a 'pure' end, whether it leads to happiness or not? Or, to put this more strongly, is not there something disreputable about keeping hold of the desire to be happy in the face of the majesty and dignity of the moral demand? There is an objection here to the notion of moral faith, that moral faith is itself incoherent. This is because the person of moral faith is supposed both to be committed to morality as a pure end, excluding self-interest as a motivation, and she is supposed to care that morality is consistent with her own happiness.

There is a way to put this problem in Christian terms which may be more familiar. We are to follow Jesus, to live as he commanded us to live and as he showed us how to live. This kind of life is a new life, given us by him, which we live in union with him. I am going to say more about this union tomorrow. But now what is the connection of this new life with the desire to go to heaven? It is true that we believe that if we live this new life we will go to heaven. But is not there something disreputable about living the new life in order to get to heaven? If our motivation were in that way self-centered, surely we would not be living the new life at all. Are we not supposed to lay down our own happiness at Christ's feet, to be willing to sacrifice it in his service, and to say with Job (in the King James version) "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"? But then what is this trust? What is it trust for? Surely it is trust that God loves us and has our well-being in his care. For a Christian, trust in God is trust for our eternal good. This suggests that a trusting self-sacrifice does not require the belief that we are jeopardizing our eternal good. I will call the view that we should be willing to sacrifice our happiness 'the disdain for happiness'. I think the disdain for happiness is misplaced.

Why should there be anything disreputable about the desire to be happy as such? A better view, in fact Kant's view, is that we were created desiring to be happy, and this is our fixed nature. What is disreputable is not the desire for happiness as such, but the wrong conception of what our happiness consists in. We do have to be willing to sacrifice our happiness as we understand this. We have to be willing for God to call us in directions that we had not at all thought of as leading to our happiness. But this does not mean that we have stopped trusting him for our eternal good. Rather, we have to admit that what we think will make us happy may not do so at all - and God is a better judge of this than we are. Second, there is indeed something disreputable about thinking of the new life as a means to heaven. This is because the language of ends and means in its most straight forward use implies that the means are external to the end, as the visit to the dentist is an external means to long-term health. The new life we are given is not in this sense a means at all, but rather it partially constitutes the end, which is, when rightly conceived, an eternal new life in union with Christ. In the same way listening to the first movement of a symphony is not a means to listening to the whole thing, but partially constitutes listening to the symphony as a whole. It is true that the

Christian will foresee heaven as a consequence of birth into the new life; and there is much opportunity for self-deception in the frame of mind of one who follows Christ for its own sake and foresees heaven as a consequence. But it does not follow that Christians are always or inevitably self-deceived.

There is a warning here, however. We need to be careful about how we present the attainment of heaven or the avoidance of hell, both to ourselves and to other people. I remember visiting a Christian school, when I was looking for a school for my own children. On the wall were a set of paintings from (I think) a third grade class. Each painting was divided into two halves, with a picture of some good deed on the bottom half and a picture of the doer of the deed in heaven on the top half. It may be that God does not mind our starting off in the childish state in which obedience to him has merely or predominantly the value of being a means to attaining some external good or avoiding some external evil. I do not know how God thinks about this. But surely this is not supposed to be our mature condition. Thomas a Kempis, in the *Imitation of Christ*, imagines Christ saying to the disciple, 'For that is not pure and perfect, which is tinctured with self-seeking. Ask not for that which is delightful and profitable to thee, but for that which is acceptable to Me.'

To apply this discussion now to moral faith, we can point to the same kind of connection between duty and happiness. We can say that the moral agent who has moral faith can foresee her happiness as consistent with living a life of duty. But this does not mean that she does her duty in order to be happy, or that she views her duty as a means to her happiness. There is nothing incoherent, then, about moral faith in Providence. But the next question, and the main question for this talk, is why a moral agent should have to have this kind of moral faith in Providence at all. The answer is that it is our nature to desire to be happy, and if we believe virtue is inconsistent with happiness, we will stop trying to be virtuous.

I am going to proceed by identifying within the faith in Providence two component beliefs, which I will call the weak belief in Providence and the strong belief. I have put these on the handout. Faith in Providence does not consist solely in these beliefs. It comprises other beliefs, and most importantly an attitude of trust. But it does comprise at least the weak and strong beliefs. First, there is the weak belief that the world could be such that every person is morally good and every person is happy. This would be the best kind of world, and faith in Providence contains the belief that this world could be such a world. What do I mean by 'could be'? At least this, that for the actual world to be such a world, none of the laws of nature that obtain in the actual world, including the laws of human nature, would have to be broken. So the weak belief is that this world could be this best kind of world. Second, there is the strong belief that the actual world is so ordered that a person's own virtue is consistent with her own happiness, whether other people are virtuous or not. I will explain what I mean by this later. There are many even stronger beliefs about Providence that I will not consider; for example, the belief that there is a divine person who rewards virtue with happiness. I am arguing towards a belief in a moral order, but not yet towards a belief in a moral orderer, that is, someone who does the ordering. This would take a number of additional premises. I will proceed by showing, first, that the weak belief is derivable or deducible from other more familiar beliefs required by the practice of morality. Then I will try to show that the weak belief is not enough, and the strong belief is needed as well.

The weak belief may seem odd, not the kind of belief that most people have or have even considered. What is the importance of the belief that the world is so ordered that it is possible for every person to be both morally good and happy? I think this possible state of the world functions for us as an ideal, and hence inspires us towards engagement with the world as it actually is. But for it to function in this way as an ideal, this state of the world does have to be possible. Consider the expression of the psalmist, that righteousness and peace, or righteousness and shalom have kissed each other. There is here the vision of a world in which we are all happy; but that is too flimsy a word. It is not merely that in such a world we have what we want, but that what we want is what it is morally good to want. That is why it is righteousness and peace that kiss each other. This is a vision by the psalmist of the full kingdom of God. This vision has the power to sustain us as we try to bring the actual world closer to the vision than it now is. When we do see glimpses of the kingdom, the vision allows us to hold them together into a pattern, and to recognize them as significant. The possibility of the world being this way thus has a direct impact on our moral lives.

What I want to do next is to show that this weak belief in Providence is in fact derivable from other beliefs which are more familiar ingredients in the commitment to morality. It is woven into the fabric of morality as we are familiar with it in our tradition, and cannot be torn out without substantial damage to that fabric. I

will start with two beliefs that the moral agent has to have about her own life. They are on the sheet. She has to believe, first, that she can, over the course of her life as a whole, will the good. This is the first kind of moral faith I distinguished earlier, faith in the possibility of virtue. It is made problematic by the gap between the moral demand and our initial capacities. I will not say more about this today, but I will return to it tomorrow. The second thing she has to believe, I think, is that she can achieve, a significant proportion of the time, the good things she aims at, (I will not argue here about what counts as a significant proportion). She has to believe this, because otherwise there would be no point in aiming at them. To make this vivid, consider what would happen in our moral life if there were the moral equivalent of Descartes's evil genius. In Descartes, the point is about the state of our knowledge. The evil genius is imagined to exercise his fiendish distortion so that all our attempts at true belief about the world end up with falsity. But suppose the evil genius concerned himself directly with our moral lives, and brought it about that whenever we tried to do good we ended up doing harm. I think we would stop trying to do good. Actually the relevant belief is more specific than this. I think the moral agent has to believe that there is the right kind of causal chain between her willing the good and her achieving it a significant proportion of the time. But there are many complexities here about what kind of causal chain is involved, and I will not go into them.

This second belief is, I think, required by the first. I do not think it would be possible, over the course of my life as a whole, to will the good, if I did not believe that I could achieve that good a significant proportion of the time. I think that the ministrations of the evil genius, if I knew there were one, would stop me trying to do good. If I could not try to do good, I could not will the good, though I could still wish that the good would occur independently of my will. My will is formed in deliberation about what to do, and I could not therefore will the good in the atrophy of moral deliberation that the evil genius would produce.

Corresponding to these two beliefs about her own life are beliefs the moral agent has to have about the lives of other people. She has to believe that they are capable of willing the good, and that they would then be capable of achieving, a significant proportion of the time, the good things they would be aiming at. Why does a moral agent have to believe these things about other people? One answer to this is that morality requires us to think of each other as people who could be good people. The moral agent has, we might say, to respect other people. This does not mean she has to regard them as virtuous. But she cannot respect them if she does not regard them as capable of virtue. This does not mean, either, that she has to believe them capable of virtue by their own resources. Augustine says, 'God bids us do what we cannot, that we may know what we ought to seek from him.' This looks like a denial of 'ought' implies 'can'; he seems to be saying that God holds us accountable to a standard we are unable to reach. But Augustine's point is that we are only unable to reach this standard if we are on our own, without God's assistance. To hold that 'ought' implies 'can' does not require holding that 'ought' implies 'can all on our own' or 'can by our own devices'. God is holding us accountable, on the traditional picture, to standards that we can reach, but only if we ask him for the help that he is in fact offering to us. By analogy, to respect another person requires believing that he has enough good in him so that given the assistance that is in fact available, he could be a good person.

The other belief she has to have about other people is that she has to believe that if everyone were virtuous, they would be able to accomplish, a significant proportion of the time, the good things they try to accomplish. Our intentions are massively interconnected with other peoples' intentions. It is hard to think of any intention I might have that does not require me to trust that others have the ability to carry out most of what they choose to do. Consider, for example, the intention which I formed when I wrote this paper, to read the paper at the Wheaton conference. Think of all the hundreds of other people whose intentions and actions were involved in the eventual fulfillment of this intention, and the hundreds of thousands involved in those peoples' intentions being fulfilled. Moreover, if everyone were virtuous, the main obstacle to peoples' accomplishing their good aims would be removed (namely the vicious interference of others). You may object that the world could still be the plaything of an evil genius, as in Descartes. But the moral agent, I have already argued, cannot believe that the world is like that.

Now if we add these various beliefs together, we get the weak faith in Providence which I started with. The best way to see this is to suppose that these various possibilities are actualized. Suppose everyone is in fact virtuous, and everyone in fact achieves much of the time the good things they aim at. Then roughly everyone will be happy. In such a world the happiness of others is what everyone will be aiming at; and if

they are achieving what they are aiming at, they will be achieving each other's happiness. Kant calls this the idea of self-rewarding morality. It is because we are collectively virtuous, on this vision of the good, that we collectively secure each other's happiness. If everyone is virtuous, there can still be tidal waves and arthritis. But such natural evil will not be, for most people, sufficient to destroy their happiness. This is because they will be embedded in loving relationships with other people, and surrounded with compassionate and competent care-givers. What we have here is an idea of self-rewarding morality, because the idea is that it is everyone's virtue which results in (roughly) everyone's happiness.

But the weak belief in Providence is not enough. Here is the turning point in my argument. We have to be able to persevere in morality even if we do not believe that most other people are morally virtuous. We need what I called the strong belief in Providence, the belief that the world is so ordered that a person's own virtue is consistent with her own happiness, whether other people are virtuous or not. I do not know how high an estimate you make of other peoples' virtue. My own estimate is not stable, but varies with my mood and my most recent experience. But what can be demonstrated is that there is very widespread gloom about the decline of virtue, and decreasing trust (at least in the countries I know well) in the general goodwill of other people. What is important for my present purposes is not how virtuous other people actually are, or even what the general belief is about most peoples' virtue. The important thing is that the moral agent's commitment to morality does not depend upon her belief in the virtue of others. Consider the fact that we try to teach our children to be moral. We also want them to be happy. If we thought that being virtuous would make them miserable, we would be more ambivalent about teaching them virtue than we actually are. But many people persevere in the attempt to bring up their children to be morally good people even though they do not think their children will be living in a society in which most of their fellows are morally good people. If the idea of self-rewarding morality were the only kind of Providence we could believe in, this perseverance would be quite mysterious. What lies behind such perseverance is surely a belief that the world is so ordered that when their children grow up, they can be both morally good and happy, and that this is secured not by general human virtue but by something else. The nature of this something else is often, I think, left indeterminate. My purpose today is just to get to this 'something else'; but eventually we need an account of how this kind of moral order could have been achieved.

I have said that we need this kind of moral faith if we are to persevere in the moral life. But it is also true that the strong belief in Providence is not clearly supported by experience. This is why moral faith is the right term here. Experience gives us all sorts of cases of morally bad people who are to all appearances happy, and morally good people who are to all appearances unhappy. Our experience is thus consistent with a much bleaker picture of how the world is. This is the kind of picture which Bernard Williams, for example, locates in the world view of the ancient Greeks. I have put this on the back of the sheet. He says, of Sophocles and Thucydides, that they represent 'human beings as dealing sensibly, foolishly, sometimes catastrophically, sometimes nobly, with a world that is only partially intelligible to human agency and in itself is not necessarily well adjusted to ethical aspirations.' He identifies this as the ancient sense of tragedy and the vulnerability of human life to the caprice of fortune. There is here a competitor to moral faith, and a much darker picture of our destiny. Actually, I think Williams is wrong about both Sophocles and Thucydides. He is reading Nietzsche back into the ancient world, because he finds the Nietzschean picture congenial himself. But I will not get into that here. He does present us with an alternative to moral faith, and that is what is important for now, rather than his historical judgement.

What Williams does is to tie the rejection of moral faith to the rejection of the traditional picture of the moral demand, especially the demand for impartiality. My argument has been that moral faith is morally necessary; necessary, that is, if the commitment to morality is to be sustained. But someone who rejects the picture of the moral demand I have been giving can use my argument to his advantage by reversing it, or turning it on its head. Bernard Williams, following Nietzsche again, wants to discard the usual picture of the moral demand presented in modern moral philosophy. He also thinks that the evidence of the lack of fit between virtue and happiness in this life is overwhelming. It is so strong that only a fool or a bigot would go on believing that the world is ordered so that we can both meet the moral demand in its traditional form and be happy. Moral faith is not possible in the kind of life Williams finds admirable. The moral argument then gives him ammunition against the traditional picture of morality. If the traditional picture of morality requires moral faith, and if moral faith is not possible in an admirable life, then the traditional picture needs to be rejected. On his view, only fools and bigots will be able to stay committed to morality in its

traditional form.

Here I think it is relevant to look at the lives of those who have experienced great evil, and have yet persevered in their faith in God. What do these lives show us? That the experts in the experience of evil have not always found that this evidence forces them to reject their faith. I talked with a woman named Eva while I was writing my book who was a survivor from the concentration camps of World War II. She said that her experience was that those who went into the camps with a strong faith in God came out, if they came out at all, with their faith stronger. It is not that they understood why God permitted the suffering, but that their faith in him is what held them and kept them through it. Eva was Jewish, and I do not know whether she believed in an afterlife or not. My sense is that she did not. But she did have a basic attitude of trust that God was in charge; and that the good was more fundamental in the world than the evil in it, and would in the end win. There is a large biographical and autobiographical literature here. Elie Wiesel, for example, says that he has been angry with God, and has not answered the question of why God allowed the Holocaust. But Elie Wiesel did not lose his faith, and in fact claims to have become closer to God through his protest. There is Corrie Ten Boom, from a Christian perspective. Dealing with death that came too soon, there is Nick Wolterstorff and C.S. Lewis. Dealing with crippling injury there is *A Step Further* by Joni Eareckson. And so on. I am not discussing here the usual argument from evil. Rather, I am looking at the character of lives which contain moral faith even in the presence of overwhelming evil. It is important that the lives of people like Eva are admirable. Their lives carry conviction. They have a reading of the enormous evil which they experience. This is not merely logically consistent with their faith (though that is important to argue). My point is, rather, that this reading lies behind lives which are obviously praiseworthy, whose goodness it would be perverse to deny. There is a difficulty here, that we have to avoid begging the question. The sceptic will resist the notion of obvious goodness. I am thinking of Christopher Hitchens who was at Oxford with me, and has just written a book trying to show that Mother Teresa is a fraud and a fascist. He has devoted his life to finding the worm in every bud. But I am content to rest on the claim that there is such a thing as an obviously good life, even though not everyone will agree about every case; and I want to add the claim that such lives will tend to be familiar with suffering, and to display what I have called moral faith.

I will end with one instructive case, that of Ivan and Alyosha in Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. Ivan tells the story of the Grand Inquisitor, which is often used in philosophy textbooks as the paradigm case of the argument against faith in Providence. Ivan ends up, after telling a number of horrifying stories of evil, saying to God that he respectfully returns him the ticket. But we have to ask what Dostoyevsky is doing in putting this powerful section in the mouth of Ivan, with Alyosha as its audience. The philosophy textbooks take the passage out of its context, and miss its point. What happens to these two brothers? Ivan, who does not fudge either the moral demand or his own radical incapacity, ends the book by going crazy and holding conversation with the devil. Alyosha ends the book declaring his faith to a circle of adoring children. Dostoyevsky is trying to show us something. The story of the Grand Inquisitor is powerful, but it is not decisive. The life of Ivan, who is a man in the moral gap but without moral faith, is doomed; but the life of Alyosha, who retains his faith without pretending that evil does not exist, is bound for glory. We can see in his life the character of the full kingdom of God towards which he is headed.

What I have shown, if my argument has worked, is that morality requires the moral faith in Providence in the form of the strong belief that virtue is consistent with happiness whether other people as a general rule are virtuous or not. I have argued against the earlier objection that moral faith is incoherent, and now against the objection that it has no place in an admirable life. The next step would be to ask what is the mechanism of Providence. How is it supposed to work? All I have argued so far is that we need the belief in something more than the virtue of other people, or what Kant calls 'self-rewarding morality'. But what could this 'something more' be? I am not going to go further today. But tomorrow I will start to attach moral faith to the Christian doctrines about God's work on our behalf.