in perfect agreement with the moral principles of reason.[a] And thus, in the end, only pure reason, although only in its practical use, always has the merit of connecting with our highest interest a cognition that mere speculation can only imagine but never make valid, and of thereby making it into not a demonstrated dogma but yet an absolutely necessary presupposition for reason's most essential ends.

But now when practical reason has attained this high point, namely the concept of a single original being as the highest good, it must not undertake to start out from this concept and derive the moral laws themselves from it, as if it had elevated itself above all empirical conditions of its application and soared up to an immediate acquaintance with new objects. For it was these laws alone whose **inner** practical necessity led us to the presupposition of a self-sufficient cause or a wise world-regent, in order to give effect[b] to these laws, and hence we cannot in turn regard these as contingent and derived from a mere will, especially
A819/B847 from a will of which we would have had no concept at all had we not formed it in accordance with those laws.[33] So far as practical reason has the right to lead us, we will not hold actions to be obligatory because they are God's commands, but will rather regard them as divine commands because we are internally obligated to them.[34] We will study freedom under the purposive unity in accordance with principles[c] of reason, and will believe ourselves to be in conformity with the divine will only insofar as we hold as holy the moral law that reason teaches us from the nature of actions themselves, believing ourselves to serve this divine will only through furthering what is best for the world[d] in ourselves and others. Moral theology is therefore only of immanent use, namely for fulfilling our vocation here in the world by fitting into the system of all ends, not for fanatically or even impiously abandoning the guidance of a morally legislative reason in the good course of life in order to connect it immediately to the idea of the highest being, which would provide a transcendental use but which even so, like the use of mere speculation, must pervert and frustrate the ultimate ends of reason.

A820/B848

On the Canon of Pure Reason
Third Section
On having an opinion, knowing, and believing.[35]

Taking something to be true[e] is an occurrence in our understanding that may rest on objective grounds, but that also requires subjective causes in

[a] *moralischen Vernunftprincipien*
[b] *Effect*
[c] *Principien*
[d] *das Weltbeste*
[e] *Das Fürwahrhalten*

the mind of him who judges. If it is valid for everyone merely as long as he has reason, then its ground is objectively sufficient, and in that case taking something to be true is called **conviction.**[a] If it has its ground only in the particular constitution of the subject, then it is called **persuasion.**[b]

Persuasion is a mere semblance,[c] since the ground of the judgment, which lies solely in the subject, is held to be objective. Hence such a judgment also has only private validity, and this taking something to be true cannot be communicated. Truth, however, rests upon agreement with the object,[d] with regard to which, consequently, the judgments of every understanding must agree (*consentientia uni tertio, consentiunt inter se*).[e] The touchstone of whether taking something to be true is conviction or mere persuasion is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being to take it to be true; for in that case there is at least a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, regardless of A821/B849
the difference among the subjects, rests on the common ground, namely the object,[f] with which they therefore all agree and through which the truth of the judgment is proved.

Accordingly, persuasion cannot be distinguished from conviction subjectively, when the subject has taken something to be true merely as an appearance of his own mind; but the experiment that one makes on the understanding of others, to see if the grounds that are valid for us have the same effect on the reason of others, is a means, though only a subjective one, not for producing conviction, to be sure, but yet for revealing the merely private validity of the judgment, i.e., something in it that is mere persuasion.

If, moreover, one can unfold the subjective **causes** of the judgment, which we take to be objective **grounds** for it, and thus explain taking something to be true deceptively as an occurrence in our mind, without having any need for the constitution of the object,[g] then we expose the illusion and are no longer taken in by it, although we are always tempted to a certain degree if the subjective cause of the illusion depends upon our nature.

I cannot **assert** anything, i.e., pronounce it to be a judgment necessarily valid for everyone, except that which produces conviction. I can A822/B850
preserve persuasion for myself if I please to do so, but cannot and should not want to make it valid beyond myself.

[a] *Überzeugung*
[b] *Überredung*
[c] *Schein*
[d] *Objekte*
[e] [Because of] agreement with a third thing, they agree among themselves.
[f] *Objecte*
[g] *Objects*

Taking something to be true, or the subjective validity of judgment, has the following three stages in relation to conviction (which at the same time is valid objectively): **having an opinion, believing,** and **knowing. Having an opinion** is taking something to be true with the consciousness that it is subjectively **as well as** objectively insufficient. If taking something to be true is only subjectively sufficient and is at the same time held to be objectively insufficient, then it is called **believing.** Finally, when taking something to be true is both subjectively and objectively sufficient it is called **knowing.** Subjective sufficiency is called **conviction** (for myself), objective sufficiency, **certainty** (for everyone). I will not pause for the exposition of such readily grasped concepts.

I must never undertake **to have an opinion** without at least **knowing** something by means of which the in itself merely problematic judgment acquires a connection with truth which, although it is not complete, is nevertheless more than an arbitrary invention. Furthermore, the law of such a connection must be certain. For if in regard to this too I have nothing but opinion, then it is all only a game of imagination without the least relation to truth. In judging from pure reason, **to have an opinion** is not allowed at all. For since it will not be supA823/B851 ported on grounds of experience, but everything that is necessary should be cognized *a priori*, the principle[a] of connection requires universality and necessity, thus complete certainty, otherwise no guidance to the truth is forthcoming at all. Hence it is absurd to have an opinion in pure mathematics: one must know, or else refrain from all judgment. It is just the same with the principles of morality, since one must not venture an action on the mere opinion that something is **allowed,** but must know this.

In the transcendental use of reason, on the contrary, to have an opinion is of course too little, but to know is also too much. In a merely speculative regard, therefore, we cannot judge at all here, for subjective grounds for taking something to be true, such as those that can produce belief, deserve no approval in speculative questions, where they neither remain free of all empirical assistance nor allow of being communicated to others in equal measure.

Only in a **practical relation,** however, can taking something that is theoretically insufficient to be true be called believing.[36] This practical aim is either that of **skill** or of **morality,** the former for arbitrary and contingent ends, the latter, however, for absolutely necessary ends.

Once an end is proposed, then the conditions for attaining it are hypothetically necessary. This necessity is subjectively but still only comA824/B852 paratively sufficient if I do not know of any other conditions at all under which the end could be attained; but it is sufficient absolutely and for

[a] *Princip*

everyone if I know with certainty that no one else can know of any other conditions that lead to the proposed end. In the first case my presupposition and taking certain conditions to be true is a merely contingent belief, in the second case, however, it is a necessary belief. The doctor must do something for a sick person who is in danger, but he does not know[a] the illness. He looks to the symptoms,[b] and judges, because he does not know of anything better, that it is consumption. His belief is merely contingent even in his own judgment; someone else might perhaps do better. I call such contingent beliefs, which however ground the actual use of the means to certain actions, **pragmatic beliefs.**

The usual touchstone of whether what someone asserts is mere persuasion or at least subjective conviction, i.e., firm belief, is **betting.** Often someone pronounces his propositions with such confident and inflexible defiance that he seems to have entirely laid aside all concern for error. A bet disconcerts him. Sometimes he reveals that he is persuaded enough for one ducat but not for ten. For he would happily bet one, but at ten he suddenly becomes aware of what he had not previously noticed, namely that it is quite possible that he has erred. If we entertain the thought that we should wager the happiness of our whole life on something, our triumphant judgment would quickly disappear, we would become timid and we would suddenly discover that our belief does not extend so far.[37] Thus pragmatic belief has only a degree, which can be large or small according to the difference of the interest that is at stake. A825/B853

Since, however, even though we might not be able to undertake anything in relation to an object,[c] and taking something to be true is therefore merely theoretical, in many cases we can still conceive and imagine an undertaking for which we would suppose ourselves to have sufficient grounds if there were a means for arriving at certainty about the matter; thus there is in merely theoretical judgments an **analogue** of practical judgments, where taking them to be true is aptly described by the word **belief,** and which we can call **doctrinal beliefs.**[d] If it were possible to settle by any sort of experience whether there are inhabitants of at least some of the planets that we see, I might well bet everything that I have on it. Hence I say that it is not merely an opinion but a strong belief (on the correctness of which I would wager many advantages in life) that there are also inhabitants of other worlds.

[a] *kennt*

[b] *Erscheinungen*, here used in a non-technical sense.

[c] *Object*

[d] ***Glaube.*** While it would be natural to translate *Glaube* as "faith" when Kant is writing specifically about belief in the existence of God, in what follows there are numerous occurrences of the term which can only be translated by "belief," so it seems better to use that translation throughout. This also allows us to translate the verb *glauben* as "believe."

A826/B854 Now we must concede that the thesis of the existence of God belongs to doctrinal belief. For although with regard to theoretical knowledge of the world I have nothing **at my command** that necessarily presupposes this thought as the condition of my explanations of the appearances of the world, but am rather obliged to make use of my reason as if everything were mere nature, purposive unity is still so important a condition of the application of reason to nature that I cannot pass it by, especially since experience liberally supplies examples of it. But I know no other condition for this unity that could serve me as a clue for the investigation of nature except insofar as I presuppose that a highest intelligence has arranged everything in accordance with the wisest ends. Consequently, the presupposition of a wise author of the world is a condition of an aim which is, to be sure, contingent but yet not inconsiderable, namely that of having a guide for the investigation of nature. The outcome of my experiments also so often confirms the usefulness of this presupposition, and nothing can be decisively said against it, so that I would say too little if I called my taking it to be true merely having an opinion, but rather even in this theoretical relation[a] it can be said that I firmly believe in God; but in this case this belief must not strictly be called practical, but must be called a doctrinal belief, which the **the-**
A827/B855 **ology** of nature (physico-theology) must everywhere necessarily produce. In regard to this same wisdom, in respect of the magnificent equipment of human nature and the shortness of life which is so ill suited to it, there is likewise to be found sufficient ground for a doctrinal belief in the future life of the human soul.

The expression of belief is in such cases an expression of modesty from an **objective** point of view, but at the same time of the firmness of confidence in a **subjective** one. If here too I would call merely theoretically taking something to be true only an hypothesis that I would be justified in assuming, I would thereby make myself liable for more of a concept of the constitution of a world-cause and of another world than I can really boast of; for of that which I even only assume as an hypothesis I must know at least enough of its properties so that I need invent **not its concept** but **only its existence.** The word "belief," however, concerns only the direction that an idea gives me and the subjective influence on the advancement of my actions of reason that holds me fast to it, even though I am not in a position to give an account of it from a speculative point of view.

But there is something unstable about merely doctrinal belief; one is often put off from it by difficulties that come up in speculation, al-
A828/B856 though, to be sure, one inexorably returns to it again.

It is entirely otherwise in the case of **moral belief.** For there it is ab-

[a] *Verhältnisse*

solutely necessary that something must happen, namely, that I fulfill the moral law in all points. The end here is inescapably fixed, and according to all my insight there is possible only a single condition under which this end is consistent with all ends together and thereby has practical validity, namely, that there be a God and a future world; I also know with complete certainty that no one else knows of any other conditions that lead to this same unity of ends under the moral law. But since the moral precept is thus at the same time my maxim (as reason commands that it ought to be), I will inexorably believe in the existence of God and a future life, and I am sure that nothing can make these beliefs unstable, since my moral principles themselves, which I cannot renounce without becoming contemptible in my own eyes, would thereby be subverted.[38]

In this way enough is left to us, even after the frustration of all the ambitious aims of a reason that wanders about beyond the boundaries of all experience, that we have cause to be satisfied with it from a practical point of view. Of course, no one will be able to boast that he **knows** that there is a God and a future life; for if he knows that, then he is precisely the man I have long sought. All knowing (if it concerns an object of reason alone) can be communicated, and I would therefore also be able to hope to have my knowledge extended to such a wonderful degree by his instruction. No, the conviction is not **logical** but **moral** certainty, and, since it depends on subjective grounds (of moral disposition) I must not even say "**It is** morally certain that there is a God," etc., but rather "**I am** morally certain" etc. That is, the belief in a God and another world is so interwoven with my moral disposition that I am in as little danger of ever surrendering the former as I am worried that the latter can ever be torn away from me. A829/B857

The only reservation that is to be found here is that this rational belief is grounded on the presupposition of moral dispositions. If we depart from that, and assume someone who would be entirely indifferent in regard to moral questions, then the question that is propounded by reason becomes merely a problem for speculation, and in that case it can be supported with strong grounds from analogy but not with grounds to which even the most obstinate skepticism[a] must yield.* But

* The human mind takes (as I believe is necessarily the case with every rational being) a natural interest in morality, even though this is not undivided and practically overwhelming. Strengthen and magnify this interest, and you will find reason very tractable and even enlightened for uniting the speculative with the practical interest. But if you do not take care to make human beings first at least half-way good, you will never be able to make sincere believers out of them! A830/B858

[a] *Zweifelsucht*

A830/B858 no human being is free of all interest in these questions. For although he might be separated from the moral interest by the absence of all good dispositions, yet even in this case there is enough left to make him **fear** a divine existence and a future. For to this end nothing more is required than that he at least cannot pretend to any **certainty** that there is **no** such being and **no** future life, which would have to be proved through reason alone and thus apodictically since he would have to establish them to be impossible, which certainly no rational human can undertake to do. That would be a **negative** belief, which, to be sure, would not produce morality and good dispositions, but would still produce the analogue of them, namely it could powerfully restrain the outbreak of evil dispositions.

But is that all, one will say, that pure reason accomplishes in opening up prospects beyond the bounds of experience? Nothing more than two articles of belief? This much common understanding could also have
A831/B859 accomplished without taking advice from the philosophers!

I will not boast here of the merit that philosophy has on account of the laborious effort of its critique of human reason, supposing even that this should be found in the end to be merely negative, for something more about that will be forthcoming in the next section. But do you demand then that a cognition that pertains to all human beings should surpass common understanding and be revealed to you only by philosophers? The very thing that you criticize is the best confirmation of the correctness of the assertions that have been made hitherto, that is, that it reveals what one could not have foreseen in the beginning, namely that in what concerns all human beings without exception nature is not to be blamed for any partiality in the distribution of its gifts, and in regard to the essential ends of human nature even the highest philosophy cannot advance further than the guidance that nature has also conferred on the most common understanding.