

faithfully kept their Hour of Guard. Eager to remove this doubt the present Reverend Director in America, Father Damien M. Saintourens, assiduously labored to formulate a more perfect organization. Recognizing that the most indefatigable workers in the association to be found amongst the young ladies, Father Saintourens proposed to organize communities of cloistered nuns of the Third Order of St. Dominic, following the contemplative and apostolic life. Their principal duty would be to recite the fifteen decades of the Rosary every hour of the day in their chapel, thus making absolutely certain the perpetual worship of the Immaculate Mother of God. Furthermore, they were bound to the choral duty of reciting the Divine Office. In connection with this highly contemplative part of their life, they were to act as the propagators of the Perpetual Rosary among their relatives, friends and acquaintances.

This unique plan was sanctioned by the authorities at Rome, and the first

foundation was made at Calais, France, on the 20th of May, 1880, by Father Saintourens, assisted by Very Rev. Mother M. of the Angels, of Calais, and Very Rev. Mother M. Rose of Manleon, France. Only a short time elapsed, however, before this community had to remove to Belgium on account of the expulsion of the religious in France. The Catholics of Belgium, ever devoted to the Rosary, showed keen interest in the Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary, assisting them to become solidly formed into a permanent society. Since that time two other foundations in Belgium have been made. Surely, then, has this religious form to the Perpetual Rosary Association proved its true worth inasmuch as it gives positive assurance of Mary's continuous worship. Every member throughout the entire world shares equally in the uninterrupted prayers offered up hourly by these self-sacrificing daughters of St. Dominic to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

—Charles Kelly, O. P.

IMMANUEL KANT

TO the uninitiated the study of philosophy is something ethereal; something to be indulged in only by those minds for which the intangible affords a particular attraction. And especially is this true of speculative philosophy, in a mundane age when the structure and inclination of society tend toward hard and practical thinking. Yet when we see how the most speculative of philosophers, succeeds in stamping with his thought nearly all the public opinion, not only of his contemporaries, but also all subsequent non-Catholic philosophic systems down to the present day, it is

only reasonable to suppose that the intellectual world is interested in his personal history. Now this is the case with Kant. Now a discourse like the present one will not even permit an analysis of the most fundamental doctrines of the great philosopher. Besides, the works of Kant are not regarded with the same interest which has gathered about his name. This may be attributed to two causes; first, as has been mentioned, the unpopularity of all speculative philosophy in our day; and secondly, the language in which his works are written. For it is undeniable that everything yet pub-

lished in the English language on the subject of Kant, errs by one of two defects; either it is mere nonsense; or it is so close a translation of the "ipsisima verba" of Kant as to offer no sort of assistance to the student.

The study of the life and teachings of Kant is replete with paradoxes. Indeed a comparison of his life, religious in the extreme, with his teachings and their effect on dogmatic Christianity reveals an inexplicable discrepancy.

Born April 22, 1724, of Scottish parents in the Prussian city of Königsberg, Immanuel Kant obtained his early education in the charity schools of his native city. The original spelling of the family name was either C or Zant; Immanuel is supposed to have changed the initial letter to K. With the aid of a near relative he was enabled to enter the University of Königsberg at the age of sixteen, where for six years he applied himself to the study of Wolff's philosophy and Newton's physics. Here we catch a first glimpse of the brilliant intellect that was to mould the philosophic thought of all Europe. For in his first work, "The Valuation of Living Forces," he definitely settled a question that had been proposed originally by Leibnitz, in opposition to the Cartesians, and that had occupied the minds of the greatest mathematicians of the Continent for more than half a century. On leaving the university he spent nine years as tutor in several distinguished families. Then he acted as licensed but unsalaried teacher for fifteen years. After successfully teaching mathematics and physics, he was appointed to the chair of philosophy, which he held until 1797, seven years before his death. It was during this professorship that he published all his important works. He died February 12, 1804.

These are the great epochs of Kant's life. But his was a life remarkable not

so much for its incidents as for the purity and philosophic dignity of its daily tenor and its silent religious rigidity. We are told by his biographers that the movements of his daily life were performed with the accuracy of a well regulated clock. Invariably he rose at the same hour, prosecuted his studies during the same periods and retired every night promptly at ten. This unruffled course, which to the majority of men would have been insufferably monotonous, was in Kant only the external manifestation of the operations of a mind well grounded and trained in staid scientific principles.

Among the scientists of the eighteenth century he held a paramount position. His name is inseparably linked with that of Laplace, whose theory as to the origin of the universe from primitive cosmic nebula he adopted and followed. Nor is he less noted as a scholar, and this in all branches of knowledge. A lover of the classics, his works, dealing with subjects almost universal in their comprehension, are adorned with quotations, the noblest and best, from both pre-Christian and Christian classic literature. But here we are confronted by the paradoxical assertion, may by many authors, though not without prejudice, that Kant during his long and laborious life never read through an entire volume.

And to this fact, in some degree at least, may be attributed his literary style, at all times poor, and sometimes barbarous. Whatever position is taken in regard to Kant's philosophical doctrines, all admit that in the ranks of non-Catholic philosophers, at any rate, the Königsberg Professor holds a foremost place. Yet it is an undeniable fact that his fame was inestimably dimmed by his utter lack of literary talent. Of this he himself was aware. He went so far as to publicly avow it, yet in no

wise did he attempt to remedy the deficiency. Not only had he no faculty for communicating ideas luminously, but his teaching was in some respects absolutely puzzling. His writings, darksome and chaotic, are so confused and perplexing, so full of tautology and circumlocution, that even his contemporaries and most intimate disciples despaired of ever fathoming their meaning.

As a lecturer Kant undoubtedly achieved his greatest success. Gathering around him students from all parts of Germany, he exercised over them a wholesome and far-reaching influence, ever seeking to inspire them with a desire to think for themselves and advising them always to follow simplicity in thought and naturalness of life. Without giving himself the air of an instructor he was really so in the very highest degree. All his lectures were seasoned with the overflow of his enlightened mind poured out naturally and unaffectedly upon every topic that suggested itself. Many times he received alluring invitations to lecture in the most noted universities of the Continent, but he always remained loyal to his native city, seldom venturing without its confines. To this influence of the lecture-hall may be traced the preponderance which he enjoyed in all public opinion; for to the end of his life he kept in close, though not intimate, contact with all his former pupils, thus extending his influence to all parts of Germany, pervading every class of society. And this influence of Kant and Kantianism is not confined to the field of philosophy. It has made inroads into the camp of theology; and this with results far more detrimental than salutary. His philosophy is in reality the basis of most of most of the contemporary religious

thought now prevalent outside the Catholic Church.

Kant's life was religious. His religion, however, may better be described as stoical than Christian. His parents, who were Pietists, reared him in the rigid sanctimoniousness of God-fearing though deluded peasants. His brother John Heinrick was a theologian, and among his most prominent friends numbered many of the notable ministers of his day, in the home of one of whom he acted as tutor for many years. To what height Kant carried his religious reverence for truth is well known. So sacred in his estimate was the obligation of unconditional veracity, that he maintained it would not be lawful to practice the slightest evasion or disguise even to save a poor innocent fellow creature from instant and bloody death, not even to save the assassin from the guilt and misery of the crime of murder. The influence of his pious parents exerted itself upon him throughout his entire life, but more especially during his last days.

After a long and laborious life filled with achievements the most glorious, after being proclaimed the greatest philosopher of Europe, after indirectly controlling the destinies of a nation and after enjoying the friendship and patronage of kings and princes, we see him here struggling with the misery of decaying faculties, and with the pain, depression and agitation of two different complaints, one of which affected his stomach, the other his head. His memory so completely failed him that the once majestic intellect could not now recall the letters of his own name. Yet the benignity and nobility of his character was eminent to the very last. During his life he practised philanthropy according to his means; which however were at no time very great.

And sometime during the period of his decline he made the statement, "I do not fear death, for I know how to die. I assure you that if I knew that this night was to be my last I would raise up my hands and say, 'God be praised.' The case would be different if I had ever caused misery to any of His creatures."

Yet in spite of all this, the fact can not be overlooked or concealed that Kant was an enemy of Christianity. Although he paid unwilling homage to the purity and holiness of Christian morality, though he professed the greatest admiration for the person and character of Christ as the exemplification of the highest moral perfection, yet he harbored an undying enmity for Christianity as an entire scheme of religious philosophy. His suspicion regarding the worth of biblical testimony and the habitual contempt for revealed religion expressed in his writings, drew upon him the reprimand and censure of Frederick William, the King of Prussia. The most fundamental dogmas of religion are undermined by his teachings. For as is well known he reduces religion to a system of conduct, proposing as a definition of it, "The acknowledgment that our duties are God's commandments." Christianity is a religion and is true only in so far as it conforms to this definition. The ideal Church should be an "ethical republic"; it should disregard all dogmatic definitions, accept "rational faith" as its guide in all intellectual matters, and establish the kingdom of God on earth by bringing about the reign of duty. Even the Christian law of charity must take second place to the supreme exigencies of duty. He maintains that those dogmas which Christianity holds sacred, such as the mystery of the Trinity, should be given an ethical interpretation; should,

so to speak, be regarded as symbols of moral concepts and values. Thus, "historical faith," he says, "is the vehicle of rational faith."

Critics and historians are not all agreed as to Kant's position among philosophers. Some rate his contributions so highly that they consider his doctrines to be the culmination of all that went before him. Others on the contrary, maintain that he made a false start when he assumed in his criticism of speculative reason that whatever is universal and necessary in our knowledge must come from the mind itself, and not from the world of reality outside of us. On one thing, however all agree; he introduced a spirit of criticism into philosophy that still rules today. He started to refute the scepticism of Hume and to establish one universal principle on which all human knowledge could be based, and ended by advocating, in principle, a scepticism far more pernicious and widespread than that of which Hume ever dreamed. His bequest to subsequent philosophic systems is a rank subjectivism; his heritage a hapless criticism, begetting idealism, agnosticism and even materialism. But whether we agree that Kant is the Copernicus of mental science, or decide with Huxley that "his baggage-train is bigger than his army," and that his doctrines are "the greased pig of philosophical dispute," it cannot be denied that he has molded the thought of all modern schools, with the solitary exception of Scholasticism. His importance cannot be overestimated. Yet by the irony of fate it is to his enemies rather than to the intrinsic value of his writings that Kant owes his position on the pinnacle of fame among the greatest of modern philosophers.

—Bonaventure Neitzey, O. P.