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"... predestination in St Paul, is ..."
Wittgenstein's religious-philosophical notes of
August-December 1937

I.

On 27 August 1937, two weeks after his arrival at Skjolden in Norway, Wittgenstein made the following note in one of his notebooks: "Etwas besser geschlafen. Lebendige Träume. Etwas niedergedrückt; Wetter und Befinden. Die Lösung des Problems, das Du im Leben siehst, ist eine Art zu leben, die das Problemhafte zum Verschwinden bringt. Dass das Leben problematisch ist, heisst, dass Dein Leben nicht in die Form des Lebens passt. Du musst dann Dein Leben verändern, und passt es in die Form, dann verschwindet das Problematische." (MS 118, p.17) This remark is written in code. A week later, he writes the following, also in code: "Etwas verkühlt und denkunfähig. Grausliches Wetter. – Das Christentum ist keine Lehre, ich meine, keine Theorie darüber, was mit der Seele des Menschen geschehen ist und geschehen wird, sondern eine Beschreibung eines tatsächlichen Vorgangs im Leben des Menschen. Denn die 'Erkenntnis der Sünde' ist ein tatsächlicher Vorgang und die Verzweiflung desgleichen und die Erlösung durch den Glauben desgleichen." (MS 118, p.108)

Such use of a code is a notable feature of the many manuscripts, collectively called the Nachlass, left by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Spread throughout his authorship are a great many sections, passages and remarks written in code. The key to the code is simple, in that it makes use of the alphabet in reversed sequence, whereby z stands for a, y for b, x for c, ... Thus for example "Rxs" is to be read as "Ich". – Following a controversial publication of Wittgenstein's early encoded notes from the years

1914-1916, the manuscript passages written in this way are more generally referred to as the "secret diaries". In his earlier working years, Wittgenstein used the code exclusively to record private experiences and meditations.

The code raises a number of hermeneutic problems. The first and most immediate is, what motivated its use? Two answers present themselves. The first follows from the fact that the earliest surviving use of the code is in a note dated 15.8.1914, i.e. in a notebook Wittgenstein kept while serving in the Austro-Hungarian army on the Eastern Front. His situation at that time brought him in close proximity with enemy territory, and it is reasonable to assume that the code was meant to preclude the possibility of his notes betraying sensitive information on the movement of troops and the like in the case of his being taken prisoner. Another answer is that the use of code is a simple expedient on Wittgenstein's part to prevent the people with whom he came in contact from reading his news and views in case they should get hold of his notebooks.

But a third possibility that presents itself is that the secret code was used merely to differentiate certain parts of the text, – more specifically to indicate that the substance of the coded remarks should not be conflated or placed on a similar level with the philosophical remarks that dominate the notebooks.

A weakness in evaluating the first two answers is that one is obliged to face the question as to why the coded remarks are recorded at all. The safest policy would have been to exclude them. – The evidence suggests, and not just in terms of the adduced reasoning, that an answer to – and our understanding of – the use of code is to be sought in the direction of the third explanation; in general terms the claim is that the use of code indicates that the substance of the particular remark is different from the strictly philosophical. This interpretation is supported by the fact that, on returning to his philosophical work in 1929, after an interval of almost ten years, he

resumes his former working habits, one of which is that he records personal news and views in code, even though no external circumstance requires him to do so.

But there is one difference between the use of code in the two periods, and this is that, in the later writings (covering the period 1929 to Wittgenstein's death in 1951) it is not so consistent as before. For, in addition to the personal remarks and the more trivial, everyday observations, the code also conceals remarks on the theory of art and culture, on ethical and religious philosophy, as well as a variety of aphoristic comments. The following will serve as an example of the latter: "Russell, Eddington *etc.* wollen alle Hohe Priester der Irreligiosität sein." (MS 108, p.102) And it is again characteristic of the later use of code, that the last three types of remarks are not consistently made in code. There are numerous remarks which, from the point of view of the above criteria, ought to be in code, but which are not. In some cases, this inconsistent use of code reveals itself in hesitancy and indecisiveness, such that Wittgenstein will suddenly swap from code to normal script or vice versa in the middle of a remark.

II.

It seems difficult therefore, to point to any unambiguous criteria for the use of code in the later writings, but in general it seems reasonable to assume that there are at least two significant intentions behind its use, namely, partially to mark a distinction between personal notes and philosophical remarks, as was the case in 1914-1916, and partially to indicate that the coded remark is out of place in the context of the ongoing course of reflection, whereby the code signals that the remark should be regarded as impulsively inserted, as an independent thought, as a peripheral remark or response to the ongoing philosophical investigation.

On closer study there is a protracted period in Wittgenstein's later working years, during which the use of code is notably inconsistent. The time in question is the late summer through to the winter of 1937. A further striking characteristic of the manuscripts that survive from these months – MSS 118, 119 and 120 – is that, uniquely for Wittgenstein's late philosophy, considerable attention is given to questions of religious philosophy, among them questions of religious faith and religious language. This is pursued parallel to Wittgenstein's work on the foundations of mathematics, in which he attempts to clarify the use in mathematics of rules, proofs and various methods of inference.

A pertinent question here, is whether there is any connection between the notably inconsistent use of code during these months and Wittgenstein's conspicuous interest during the same period in questions of religion and religious philosophy. If we focus merely on that part of his authorship which has so far been published, then the issue is hard to resolve, but if we look more closely at the hitherto unpublished manuscripts, we note that many of the coded remarks more than hint that Wittgenstein was going through a severe personal (existential) crisis, which cleared the way for a breakthrough in his religious thinking – a breakthrough that takes its cue from inner struggle. And everything indicates that this is the biographical occasion for Wittgenstein to include questions of religion and religious philosophy among his central philosophical concerns. – The two coded remarks with which this essay begins are clear textual evidence for this breakthrough.

Wittgenstein's work on these new questions lies somewhere between the mundane clarification of experience, a personal striving for enlightenment, and a philosophical endeavour to define concepts. Religious engagement and the philosophies of language and religion seem to merge here. And it is for precisely this reason that it is tempting to assume that the intensity of the breakthrough and the depth of his religious philosophical reflection are what cause or

promote an indecisiveness in the use of code; what we see is that, time and again, Wittgenstein has difficulty in deciding whether he is making a statement about his personal faith and tribulations, or whether he is noting a strictly philosophical, conceptual investigation.

In what follows I want to look a little more closely at the partially coded remarks of this breakthrough from August-December 1937, which not only touch on more traditional themes within the philosophy of religion, but also document Wittgenstein's fear, worry and confusion, especially regarding one particular dogmatic notion.

III.

During his stay at Skjolden in the late summer, autumn and winter of 1937, Wittgenstein hoped to complete one of the systematic presentations of the insights he had gained since his return to Cambridge in 1929. He had begun work on a number of such summaries during the preceding autumn. His concern here is with a new description of language, which in several respects appears to be a revision of that which he worked out during the years 1912-1919. The latter is to be found in its definitive form in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922). In this major early work he puts forward a picture theory of language which includes a narrowly delimited theory of meaning (a semantic realism), according to which the meaning of a name or a statement is defined in relation to the things or facts to which the name or statement corresponds. One of the implications of this theory of meaning is that only the statements of empirical science are accorded meaning, whereas those of ethics, aesthetics and religion are regarded as nonsense. It is this early description of language which Wittgenstein was concerned to revise during the early 1930s, but which instead acquired the form of an entirely new standpoint within the philosophy of language. This emerged in particular from the comparison of language and rule

guided activity in the form of the game. At the same time he arrives here at a new theory of meaning (a praxeological semantics), whereby the meaning of words and sentences is determined by their conventionally stipulated multifarious usage and function. And this view set the scene for the claim that the numerous applications of language which we find in addition to those within the natural sciences must also be regarded as being meaningful. We find this new account of language formulated (in its final version) in the incomplete and posthumously published work *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (1953). There he takes up the claim of his earlier philosophy, that there is only one type of meaningful statement, namely that of the descriptive natural sciences: "Wieviele Arten der Sätze gibt es aber? Etwa Behauptung, Frage und Befehl? – Es gibt unzählige solcher Arten: unzählige verschiedene Arten der Verwendung alles dessen, was wir 'Zeichen', 'Worte', 'Sätze', nennen. Und diese Mannigfaltigkeit ist nichts Festes, ein für allemal Gegebenes; sondern neue Typen der Sprache, neue Sprachspiele, wie wir sagen können, entstehen und andre veralten und werden vergessen. (Ein ungefähres Bild davon können uns die Wandlungen der Mathematik geben.) Das Wort 'Sprachspiel' soll hier hervorheben, dass das Sprechen der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform." (PU §23)

IV.

Many reasons can be adduced for Wittgenstein's (existential) crisis during his stay in Norway in 1937, but two of the more significant are, firstly, an enduring doubt about the value of his philosophical work, and, secondly, an understandable doubt as to whether or not he has the capability of finishing a philosophical work (a book), the first since the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. On the 15.9.1937 he writes in a non-coded remark: "Wenn ich für mich denke ohne ein Buch schreiben zu wollen, so springe ich um das Thema herum; das ist die einzige mir natürliche Denkweise. In einer Reihe gezwungen

fortzudenken ist mir eine Qual. Soll ich es nun überhaupt probieren?? Ich *verschwende* unsägliche Mühe auf ein Anordnen der Gedanken, das vielleicht gar keinen Wert hat." (MS 118, p. 185) The day before, similarly in a non-coded remark, he had written in the same tone of defeat: "Das Leben stellt uns Bilder vor Augen als Ziele und macht uns danach laufen und dann verlieren wir die Kraft." (MS 118, p. 184)

Despite the tone of the two quoted passages, both of which were written in September, that month otherwise constituted a good period of work. But from the middle of October through to his departure on 12. December, Wittgenstein was plagued by anxiety, despair, fear and depression. The following coded remarks from that period are typically revealing: "22.10.1937 Immer, wenn mir etwas widerfährt, geht gleichsam eine Furchtwelle über mich, Furcht vor dem Tode, vor, schwerem Unglück, u.s.w. Diese Furcht ist nicht gut; aber sie zeigt, dass ich mein Leben falsch auffasse." (MS 119, p.151) "22.11.1937 Ich zähle jetzt die Tage, meines Aufenthaltes. Noch etwas weniger als 3 Wochen. Ob ich sie erleben werde. – Ich fürchte mich vor allem; vor dem Aufenthalt, vor der Reise durch Deutschland; sogar etwas vor Wien, und vor der Zukunft. Ja, ich bin jetzt, sozusagen, beschissen. Fühle mich verloren. Gott wende es! Sich in der Welt finden – darauf kommt es an. Nicht von ihr fordern. Sondern sich in sie finden, wie sie ist. D. h.: nicht sich einen Roman vormachen, und dann über den Mangel an Übereinstimmung der Welt mit ihm erstaunt und beleidigt sein. Aber ich tue dies eben doch. Ich fühle mich ziemlich elend." (MS 120, pp. 15-16) "23.11.1937 Konnte heute besser arbeiten. Gott sei Dank. Obwohl ich es nicht verdient habe." (MS 120, p.21) "25.11.1937 Bin ängstlich, hier vor Eis eingeschlossen zu werden. Über den Fluss kann man nicht mehr gehen, weil da das Eis weggeschwemmt ist. Die Angstgedanken hindern mich am Arbeiten." (MS 120, p.22) "12.12.1937 Auf dem Schiff nach Bergen. Grosse Kälte, und etwas unwohl. Gestern ordnete ich das Letzte in meiner Hütte, ging dann nach Skjolden und nahm Abschied von Allen. Habe nicht gearbeitet." (MS 120, p.90)

It is during these months that a religious preoccupation comes to the fore, as it were in answer to Wittgenstein's despair and anxiety. The greater part of the coded and non-coded notes and remarks concerning the religious interest are dominated by two recurrent themes; partly by Wittgenstein's attempts to formulate an account of the nature and demands of his religious preoccupation and allegiance, partly by his probing attempts to clarify his understanding of and his personal standpoint concerning a particular field of theological concepts, namely, St Paul's notion of predestination.

V.

The evidence suggests that many of the notes and remarks on Wittgenstein's principle themes can also be viewed as a commentary on an ongoing and fairly thorough reading of the New Testament. On 5. October 1937 he writes: "Lese im Evangelium, aber ohne Verständnis." (MS 119, p.77) That his reading was not confined to one of the gospels, is evident among other things from the fact that several concepts from the Pauline Epistles appear in his remarks, and that in one case he even quotes from one of them (Cor. I, 12,3). What shows that his reading was thorough is that Wittgenstein is concerned with the fact that the four gospels constitute reports which partially corroborate one another (particularly the so-called synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke), but which also contain inherent contradictions. On 22.10.1937 he writes: "Gott lässt das Leben des Gottmenschen von vier Menschen berichten, von jedem anders, und widersprechend – ..." (MS 119, p.152) At the beginning of the same month, 4.10.1937, he had recorded various remarks on the difference between the tone and the message of the gospels and the Epistles. This is introduced thus: "Die Quelle, die in den Evangelien ruhig und durchsichtig fließt, scheint in den Briefen des Paulus zu schäumen." (MS 119, p.71) In the Epistles, Wittgenstein continues, we encounter a human passion, a pride and anger, which seem

irreconcilable with – or at least incongruous beside – the humility of the gospels. The emphasis of St Paul's private individuality can be sensed in these letters, an individuality distant from the gospels. He continues: "In den Evangelien – so scheint mir – ist alles *schlichter*, demütiger, einfacher. Dort sind Hütten; – bei Paulus eine Kirche. Dort sind alle Menschen gleich und Gott selbst ein Mensch; bei Paulus gibt es schon etwas wie eine Hierarchie; Würden, und Ämter. – So sagt quasi mein *Geruchsin*." (MS 119, p.71)

Perhaps the later coded remark of 12.10.1940 – "Es ist schwer mit einem Messer im Leib zu arbeiten." (MS 123, p.30) – is an allusion to a comment of St Paul's, in which he says that, in order to prevent him from becoming too elated at the abundance of revelations, he has been given a thorn in the flesh (Cor. II, 12,7).

VI.

The earnestness of Wittgenstein's attempts to account for the character and tendency of his religious preoccupation is further witnessed by the biographical depth of his breakthrough. In this respect he talks of "my religion" when remarking that his own religious experience has estranged him from the form religion has taken on in Germany, or, more generally, in the West. Late in August, 29.8.1937, he writes in a non-coded remark: "Das Gemütvolle und das Treuherzige in der Religion der Germanen, oder Abendländer, ist mir zuwider. Das heisst, *das* ist kein Zugang zur Religion für mich. Dies ist, natürlich, keine Kritik der Andern, aber es heisst: mein Weg ist nicht *dieser* – und mit allem, was so aussieht, habe ich nichts zu tun. Das ist eine Landestracht – aber nicht die meine. Wenn also Einer, quasi, sagt: 'Nur die Treuherzigen kommen in den Himmel', so kann ich sagen: Nein, das ist meine Religion nicht. – " (MS 118, p.57)

Some three months later on 12.12.97, the first day of his homeward journey from Skjolden to Bergen, he adds in a longer coded remark, that despite not being able to call Jesus "Lord", since the term means nothing to him, and because he doesn't believe that Christ will come to judge him, he is nevertheless inclined to believe in Christ's resurrection. He continues: "Ich spiele gleichsam mit dem Gedanken. – Ist er nicht auferstanden, so ist er im Grab verwest, wie jeder Mensch. *Er ist tot und verwest*. Dann ist er ein Lehrer, wie jeder andere und kann nicht mehr *helfen*; und wir sind wieder verwaist und allein. Und können uns mit der Weisheit und Spekulation begnügen. Wir sind gleichsam in einer Hölle, wo wir nur träumen können und vom Himmel, durch eine Decke gleichsam, abgeschlossen. Wenn ich aber *wirklich* erlöst werden soll, – so brauche ich *Gewissheit* – nicht Weisheit, Träume, Spekulation – und diese *Gewissheit* ist der Glaube." (MS 120, p.102) Two weeks earlier, 28.11.1937, he had compared his own religious standpoint with that exhibited by a pious person. This comparison gave an opportunity to emphasise that his own standpoint agrees with much that is in the Bible: "Ich fühle immer, was nie ein frommer Mensch fühlt, dass Gott dafür verantwortlich ist, was ich bin. Es ist das Gegenteil von Frömmigkeit. Immer wieder möchte ich sagen: 'Gott, wenn Du mir nicht hilfst, was kann ich tun!' Und obwohl ich damit in Übereinstimmung mit manchem bin, was in der Bibel steht, so doch nicht mit der Einstellung frommer Männer. Ich kann aber diesen Teil meines Denkens nicht – oder nicht direkt – bekämpfen, sondern ich kann nur trachten mich ... anständig, nicht gemein, feig, ungut zu benehmen. Und gelingt mir das, so mag sich auch eine Denkart ändern – mein Gebrauch des Wortes 'Gott.'" (MS 120, pp.32-33)

VII.

Among the remarks that constitute his breakthrough, there are, as mentioned, also attempts to formulate an understanding of – as well as a personal standpoint towards – a particular religious concept.

This central preoccupation can be seen as a personal response to a reading of (some of) the Pauline Epistles (perhaps most pertinently Romans I and Corinthians). On 20.11.1937 he writes in a non-coded remark: "In der Religion müsste es so sein, dass jeder Stufe der Religiosität eine Art des Ausdrucks entspräche, die auf einer niedrigeren Stufe keinen Sinn hat. Für den jetzt auf der niedrigeren Stufe Stehenden ist diese Lehre, die auf der höheren Bedeutung hat, null und nichtig; sie *kann* nur *falsch* verstanden werden, und daher gelten diese Worte für diesen Menschen *nicht*. Die Lehre, z. B. von der Gnadenwahl, bei Paulus, ist auf meiner Stufe Irreligiosität, ein hässlicher Unsinn. Daher gehört sie nicht für mich da ich das mir gebotene Bild nur falsch anwenden kann. Ist es ein frommes und gutes Bild, dann für eine ganz andere Stufe, auf der es gänzlich anders im Leben muss angewandt werden, als ich es anwenden könnte." (MS 120, p.8)

Thus the theological concept that preoccupies Wittgenstein during these months is the Pauline doctrine of predestination. Later in his authorship Wittgenstein would return to this concept in various contexts. – Before briefly describing the fundamental aspects of this notion, it should be pointed out that the remark quoted above illustrates Wittgenstein's religious engagement during this period in that he places himself at a particular station or level of piety. It is unclear what is further meant by station or level, but I assume that it does not imply a theory of stages or a conception of a stepwise and progressive movement up towards a steadily deeper and higher knowledge of God, but rather that Wittgenstein wishes to point out here, that he feels a personal involvement in the use of religious concepts in one of many possible ways (levels). – This interpretation fits best with the new linguistic philosophical position.

The doctrine of predestination maintains, in general, that a person's redemption or damnation after death does not depend on the person's own decisions, moral striving and actions, but upon God's preordained intention. Associated with this doctrine is a notion of

selection, whereby redemption is only granted to a few. Thus the doctrine portrays God's mercy as particular, since it only applies to a selected few and not to all. In other words: the salvation of the individual depends on God, since God has determined (God's omnipotence), and has knowledge of (God's omniscience), who shall be redeemed and who not. From this it is a necessary conclusion that a person can affect nothing of his own volition; alone, he cannot acquire faith, and neither can he rescue himself from damnation. Indeed, those who are intended for damnation, cannot – on account of God's predetermination – arrive at true faith. It is this rough concept, which seems to be implied in e.g. chapter 8 of the Epistle to the Romans (verses 28-30), in which it is stated, on the one hand, that everything works for the good among those who love God, and who, according to His purpose, have been called, and on the other, that those whom He foreknew, and whom He has predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, will be justified and glorified. Even if Wittgenstein regards this doctrine, this picture, as an ugly nonsense (as seen from his level of piety) he doesn't deny that it might be valid and meaningful for others. Those who understand and apply this doctrine (Augustine (354-430), J. Calvin (1509-1564) and M. Luther (1483-1546)) are likely to be familiar with the use of quite different religious concepts than those Wittgenstein feels at home with. – One of the questions that Wittgenstein's standpoint raises is: what assumptions or arguments are decisive in his rejection of the doctrine as irreligious? What are the convictions that stand in the way of his finding a correct understanding and application of this doctrine in his life?

This question can be answered from two different angles. The first of these sees his rejection as a consequence of the standpoint he takes to the question: is the individual autonomous as far as religious matters are concerned? The second sees the rejection as a consequence of Wittgenstein's concurrent reflections about what religious language is *not*, and what it *cannot* do.

VIII.

Wittgenstein's answer to the question about whether the will is free also where religious matters are concerned is, in a sense, already anticipated in one of the remarks already quoted (of 28.11.1937, see above, VI.; i.e. seven days after the one just cited concerning the Pauline doctrine of predestination). From this it is evident that Wittgenstein's standpoint is in some respects related to that of Pelagianism, which assumes that the individual is able to take the initiative to take part in the process of redemption. According to this position, God's mercy presupposes that mankind is equipped with a will which is free to pursue the good. The act of mercy is *bonum naturae* – in that it looks positively on the individual's initiative and striving to act ethically. And in this case this means a striving to act decently, and to avoid mean, cowardly and contemptible behaviour. The emphasis on human striving, that the individual is in fact capable of something – "Du musst trachten – never mind God." (MS 120, p.34); later, in 1950, he writes "Wenn Du also im Religiösen bleiben willst, musst Du *kämpfen*." (MS 174, p.7) – can thus be seen as one of the convictions underlying the rejection of religious determinism. Wittgenstein's rejection is therefore warranted by the distance he takes from, on the one hand, notions that each person is individually and utterly abandoned to good and evil (divine) forces which lie beyond his control, and on the other hand, from the doctrine's ethical implications, to the effect that such crucial concepts as sin, guilt, duty and responsibility seem to fade in significance, or ultimately become entirely redundant – since how one acts in the present ultimately makes no difference!

The second approach to the question of why the doctrine of predestination is dismissed as irreligious points in an entirely different direction. Here Wittgenstein's standpoint is placed in relation to a remark from MS 118, worked out in the latter part of September, in which it is pointed out that the doctrine (theory) of divine predestination should be regarded as an explanation which is

unjustifiably appended to, or erroneously compared with, the Christian proclamation. (This follows a warning that Christianity must not be regarded as a theory about what has happened – and what will happen – with the individual's soul.) For what we have here is an explanation in which forms of expression, such as those used to tell of how God treats his human creations, are redeployed or reformulated as a theory (a theory which poses as a presentation of these forms of expression, and which aims to found and justify God's actions), and as such they stand in stark contrast to the peculiar character of the religious language of the New Testament. The reformulation deprives the religious forms of expression of their force and strength, since their strength lies in the very fact that they do not allow of use in a theoretical way. On 24.9.1937 Wittgenstein writes: "Man kann von religiösen Gleichnissen sagen, sie bewegen sich am Rande des Abgrundes. Z. B. von der Allegorie Bunyan's. Denn wie, wenn wir bloss dazusetzen: 'und alle diese Fallen, Sümpfe, Abwege, sind vom Herrn des Weges angelegt, die Ungeheuer, Diebe, Räuber von ihm geschaffen worden'? Gewiss, das ist nicht der Sinn des Gleichnisses! aber diese Fortsetzung liegt zu nahe! Sie nimmt dem Gleichnis, für Viele und für mich, seine Kraft." (MS 118, p.233) Two or three years later he writes in a notebook: "Die Gleichnisse des N.T. ... sind ohne Boden." (MS 162b, p.128)

Seen against the background of these reflections, Wittgenstein's rejection of the doctrine of predestination can also be explained by his dislike for any attempt either to work out or propose theories about the text corpus of the New Testament, or to justify the forms of expression found therein. Thus the doctrine stands out as a distorted, or, in other words, a misunderstood, use of a language of religion which tends towards speculation. Religious language can only, and should only, proclaim what has happened, what will happen and what we should do. It should not explain – from a theoretical standpoint – nor account for what is proclaimed: "Die Religion sagt: *Tu dies!* – *Denk so!* – aber sie kann es nicht begründen, und versucht sie es auch nur, so stösst sie ab; denn zu jedem Grund,

den sie gibt, gibt es einen stichhaltigen Gegengrund. Überzeugender ist es, zu sagen: 'Denke so! – so seltsam dies scheinen mag. –' Oder: 'Möchtest Du das nicht tun? – so abstossend es ist. –'" (MS 118, p.234)

The remark quoted here from 24.9.1937 is followed on the same day by a surprising – in view of the current discussion – reformulation of the doctrine of predestination. – What if the doctrine is not the result of theological speculation about an incomprehensible mystery! What circumstances could then explain its origin? Perhaps the doctrine arose out of terrible suffering or deep despair and impotence. In the light of such experiences the doctrine can be presented as the description of a condition or as a statement: "Gnadenwahl: So darf man nur schreiben unter den fürchterlichsten Leiden – und dann heisst es etwas ganz anderes. Aber darum darf dies auch niemand als Wahrheit zitieren, es sei denn, er selbst sage es unter Qualen. – Es ist eben keine Theorie. – Oder auch: Ist dies Wahrheit, so ist es nicht die, die damit auf den ersten Blick ausgesprochen zu sein scheint. Eher als eine Theorie, ist es ein Seufzer, oder ein Schrei." (MS 118, p.236)

(Translated from Danish by Peter Cripps – The Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen)

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