

### **The Shopkeeper**

‘It certainly conforms with duty that a shopkeeper not overcharge an inexperienced customer, and where there is a good deal of trade a prudent [expedient]\* merchant does not overcharge but keeps a fixed general price for everyone, so that a child can buy from him as well as everyone else. People are thus served honestly; but this is not nearly enough for us to believe that the merchant acted in this way from duty and basic principles of honesty’ his advantage required it.’

(Kant, 1785, 397)

\*expedient means ‘advantageous, whether moral or immoral’

### **The Preservation of Life\* 1**

‘To preserve one’s life is a duty, and besides everyone has an immediate inclination to do so. But on this account the often anxious care that most people take care of it still has no inner [moral] worth and their maxim has no moral content. They look after their lives in conformity with duty but not from duty.’

(Kant, 1785, 397-398)

\*i.e. not to commit suicide

### **The Preservation of Life 2**

‘...if adversity and hopeless grief have quite taken away the taste for life; if an unfortunate man, strong of soul and more indignant about his fate that despondent or dejected, wishes for death and yet preserves his life without loving it, not from inclination or fear but from duty, then his maxim\* has moral content.’

(Kant, 1785, 398)

\* a maxim is the subjective principle of volition: the reason upon which a will acts

### **The Sympathetic Philanthropist\***

‘to be beneficent where one can is a duty, and besides there are many souls so sympathetically attuned that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find inner satisfaction in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own

work. But I assert that in such a case an action of this kind, however it may conform with duty, and however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth...[it] deserves praise and encouragement but not esteem, for the maxim lacks moral content, namely that of doing such actions not from inclination but from duty.'

(Kant, 1785, 398)

\* a philanthropist is someone who gives time, money, or expertise for good causes

### **The Unsympathetic Philanthropist 1**

'Suppose that the mind of this philanthropist were overclouded by his own grief, which extinguished all sympathy with the fate of others, and that while he still had the means to benefit others in distress, their troubles did not move him because he had enough to do with his own; and suppose that now, when no longer incited to do it by any inclination, he nevertheless tears himself out of his deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, simply from duty, then the action first has its genuine moral worth.'

(Kant, 1785, 398)

### **The Naturally Unsympathetic Philanthropist**

If nature had put little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if (in other respects an honest man) he is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because he himself is provided with the special gift of patience and endurance towards his own sufferings and presupposes the same in every other and even requires it; if nature had not properly fashioned such a man (who would in truth not be its worst product) for a philanthropist, would he not still find within himself a source from which to give a far higher worth than what a mere good-natured temperament might have? By all means! It is just then that the worth of a character comes out, which is moral and incomparably the highest, namely, that he is beneficent, not from inclination but from duty

(Kant, 1785, 398-399)