

Presuppositions, Purpose and Content²

A. The Nature of Revelation

From "Science" and Mythology to Revelation

To move from Rational Science to Revelation is to move "from the Kingdom of Nature (as Leibniz said), i.e., the realm of necessity, to the Kingdom of Grace." And to move from Mythological Religion to Revealed Religion is to make a transition from necessity to freedom, from nature to history, from Law to Grace. Even though the same principles underlie both forms of religion, the differences between them are "profound."

The representations of Mythology are the products of a *necessary* process, a movement of the natural consciousness, left merely to itself, on which ... no free cause *outside* of consciousness can have any further influence. Revelation, however, is expressly conceived as something which presupposes an *Actus* outside of consciousness, and a relation which the most free cause, God, grants or has granted to the human consciousness not out of necessity but in complete freedom.

Mythology and Revelation are to one another as exoteric process is to inner history. In the process there is pure necessity; in the history there

is freedom. Of course, Mythology has produced in itself something esoteric (in the Mysteries), but even this is only a product of the external process. When Science passes from Mythology to Revelation it moves into a completely different sphere. In the former case it dealt with a necessary process; in the latter case it deals with something which exists only as a result of an absolutely free willing (VI:395f, 409).

Revelation is *a posteriori* Knowledge (VI:396-399)

It follows that Revelation is a separate and special source of *knowledge* whose content cannot be derived from purely rational truths. It may be natural to think otherwise, for, after all, we are considering a "philosophy" of Revelation. As Schelling puts it:

If Philosophy is usually understood as a Science which Reason produces purely and simply out of itself, it would be natural to understand Philosophy of Revelation as an attempt to present the ideas of Revealed Religion as necessary ideas, as pure truths of Reason, or to derive them from such (VI:396).

But those who consider "the essential and abiding content of Revelation to be pure rational truths" (or to be derivable therefrom), "completely eliminate the distinction between the content of Revelation and what they call reason", and make the whole idea of "Revelation" meaningless and superfluous. Why use the word "revelation" at all if, in the end, "it makes us aware of nothing more than what we knew or could know without it?" Some, of course, try to give the word significance by making it refer to "a special work of Providence" (viz., Christianity) which, they say, brought mankind "more quickly (*früher*) into possession of certain purer or better ideas" (VI:396). But this is a self-defeating proposal, and Schelling allows "a certain H...g" to say so:

A Revelation which has no other content than what man can know on the basis of pure reason, ceases therewith to be Revelation. If one wishes to say that the value of Revelation consists only in a certain anticipation of rational knowledge, since Providence makes use of it as a means of communicating certain truths to men earlier than evolving reason would have succeeded in becoming acquainted with them, absolutely nothing is gained thereby. For since this explanation comes

associated with the affirmation that the first Revelation was clothed in unessential wrappings which could be stripped off only after centuries, it follows that the alleged advantage of Revelation is given up; for it is clear that according to this view it would be considered not as a method of accelerating the development of reason in man, but instead as the chief cause of its retardation (VI:398).

The honest investigator must concede that for "the true believers in revealed religion", Revelation is neither meaningless nor superfluous. What Revelation discloses has not been and cannot be discovered by Science or reason. "Revealed knowledge" is, therefore, empirical, *a posteriori* knowledge. "The Science attained by means of Revelation belongs to the general category of knowledge which comes to us through experience" (VI:396, 398). Clearly, "reason is not the only source of knowledge, and not all things are known in the same way." Rational Philosophy may, of course, speculate that there is a God, and that there is in Him the possibility - even the likelihood - that He will decide to create other beings, "but we could never claim to *know* this other than through the fact *that* He has actually created." *A priori* speculation about the divine motives which make God's creative and redemptive acts intelligible, can never give us certainty. Only the *fact* of the world and the *fact* of Revelation can do this (VI:399, 404).

Revelation Discloses the Divine Will (VI:399-402)

In the highest sense, what Revelation "reveals" is "the divine will"; and what the divine Will "wills" is the "restoration" of fallen man and, through that, the final restoration of the whole creation. The New Testament declares the end-purpose of Revelation to be "a new or second creation", and knowledge of this new creation-process can never be *a priori* but only *post facto*, since it is a process that results from "the purest and most free will" (VI:399f).

To keep this point about Revelation in context, Schelling recalls that, for him, "Creation" means the free divine decision to place in tension the potencies within the divine being, thus giving rise to "a theogonic process which is at the same time a cosmogonic one", characterized by strict inner necessity and running through various moments (of which we have an anticipatory, *a priori* knowledge), until man - the "extra-divine" being appears. In man, this theogonic-cosmogonic process (which has already given rise to nature) repeats itself and gives rise to Mythology (as was shown in detail in The First

Book above). This movement is now “a completely subjective one taking place *purely* in consciousness and again moves forward in itself through certain necessary moments.” But precisely because Mythology is a *necessary* theogonic process which takes possession of human consciousness, it is not self-explanatory. Hence, the Philosophy of Mythology “can comprehend the *content* of Mythology but cannot *explain* its existence.” A higher explanatory context is needed, and this is exactly what the Philosophy of Revelation provides (VI:400).

Now, while God *willed* the birth of nature and the creation of man, and freely placed the fate of His creation in the hands of a creature, He did *not* will the “fall” of Man. Man’s “withdrawal” and estrangement from his Creator was *self-willed*. Nevertheless, God *foresaw* that this “catastrophe” would occur. Why then did he let it happen? Schelling’s answer is that “before the foundation of the world” God had determined a remedy equal to the situation.

He knows how to counter the most extreme thing that can happen with another most extreme thing. Hence the world will not be lost, but since it was not preserved by a mere creaturely will, it will be preserved on a higher level by a deed which cancels out *all* doubt, by the deed of a supra-creaturely and yet at the same time human will - by a second man (VI:406f).

And how is all this known? How is it known that man’s salvation and restoration is the divine will? This, replies Schelling, is the knowledge uniquely disclosed by Revelation. Mythology, it is true, is also the result of the divine Will, but it is so only “accidentally” and does not reveal to us the divine intention that “human consciousness is not to be lost.” Only through God’s revelatory *act* in Christ do we finally *know* that His intention is to redeem and restore.

This divine Will goes *beyond* Mythology and hence becomes manifest only in that which, in the order of time, comes after Paganism. We can, of course, argue from Mythology to the divine Will (and perhaps it can be shown that the most thoughtful and wide-awake Pagans suspected something quite different behind Mythology - some kind of secret which was for them inscrutable), but Mythology is not the primary and proper effect of this Will ...

This divine Will, which we cannot but think of as posited and comprehended with the first downfall (*Umsturz*) - this divine Will as

actual - is in the most eminent sense something which is absolutely not known without Revelation. It is the secret *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. And Revelation in the highest sense (and we speak of it only in this sense) is the revelation of this will (VI:401, 402).

Will and Deed

Any "Will" is a mystery until it is executed. Actual performance is what "reveals" one's intentions with certainty. Hence, "the highest revelation consists precisely in the execution of that Will or divine decision formed at the same time as the catastrophe of man" (VI:406f). We may still speak of "the mystery of revealed religion", but it is false to use this word "mystery" as if revealed truths or facts, once revealed, are yet somehow still "secret".

So long as a will is only a will and has not passed over into deed, it is a mystery. The deed is its manifestation by which it ceases to be a mystery and can be both recognized and comprehended ...

The Apostle Paul speaks of a plan of God *kept secret* from the foundation of the world, but now revealed by Christ. And everywhere he speaks, in expressions of deepest joy, of the fact that what was hidden from all earlier times, and even from the Fathers - the mystery of God in Christ, i.e., what was a secret between the Father and Christ - has now been made manifest to all the world through the appearance of Christ (VI:403).

B. Revelation and Faith, Reason and Unreason

Faith as Objective (VI:404-408)

If the philosopher's characteristic attitude is that of wonder or astonishment, then such an attitude will be excited not by what can be understood as rationally necessary but by what lies beyond all necessary reason (*Einsicht*) and knowledge. And this "beyond", this which is absolutely worthy of astonishment, is, for Schelling, the truth of Revelation. The aim of all Science, the final goal of all Reason, is that repose of absolute certainty which Schelling can call Faith. For all movement, including the movement of Science, is a search after *rest*.

The idea of a never-ceasing advance is really the idea of a progress without a goal (*Ziel*). But what is without a goal is also without

meaning. Hence such an unending progress is at the same time the dreariest and most empty thought ... Vain is everything that exists, or that happens, without purpose (*Ziel*); and every thought which does not find such an end (*Ende*) is simply a destroyer of the spirit (VI:405).

All movement or "becoming" is but "a transition point" in which what "becomes" both is and is not. "The final goal of knowledge", however, must be the attainment of a state of finality and certainty in which all further striving ceases. "All possibility must become actuality in order that everything might become clear, open and decisive, no secret enemy remaining." This final goal which lies "beyond all thought", and "of which I can only say that *it is*", this state in which thought rests and uncertainty ceases and the *work* of knowledge is done - this one may call the state of *Faith*. But if so, then "one must not regard Faith as *ungrounded* knowledge", for it would be the most *grounded* of all!

The final thing in which all knowledge *rests*, cannot be *without* ground, since this would contradict the claim that it is the final thing. If it is the last, it is the most fundamental thing of all. It cannot again become the ground of an advance, else it would not be the end ...

One cannot begin Science with Faith, as so many teach and preach. For the certainty which eliminates all doubt (and only this is to be called Faith) is only the *end* of Science. First the Law and then the Gospel. Reason = the Law, Faith = the Gospel. But just as the Apostle says that the Law was the disciplinarian which brought us to Christ, so must the powerful discipline of Science precede Faith if we are to be justified, i.e., really made perfect through Faith, i.e., through the possession of the certainty that eliminates *all* doubt ...

Of course, in the sense in which every beginning is really faith in the *end* which is not yet seen (for if I did not believe, I would not even begin), one can say that the beginning of Science is Faith. But *this* Faith strives after knowledge and proves itself precisely in actual knowledge, so that the most faithful are the most knowledgeable and, *vice versa*, those who have the greatest confidence in knowledge are the most faithful (VI:407f).

Faith then is of at least *two kinds*. "There is a faith as *beginning* (which is, however only faith in knowledge), and there is a faith as *end*, but this is only knowledge come to rest." There are, of course, "a great many things that are doubtful"; but the "final thing, in itself, i.e., taken *objectively*, is in no way doubtful" (VI:408).

Faith as Subjective

Faith, however, is also something *subjective*. "It is the trust, confidence, heart (*Herz*), *courage* (*Muth*), to grasp what one doubts simply because it is too transcendent for our accustomed notions" (VI:408).

If anyone penetrated through to the final knowledge, the question would then be whether he is capable of comprehending and accepting it, whether he has the courage for it ...

Revelation calls out to men: only believe, only believe; i.e., dare to regard this as true. In this sense, Science itself, as soon as it ascends to the higher domain, requires Faith, i.e., the courage and the capacity to be able to regard as true the extraordinary when it presents itself.

To some souls (so we must suppose) this Faith is given directly - they themselves see it only as Fate (*Glück*), as undeserved grace, which came upon them. Others are brought to (Faith) through their life-experiences, since they find no other rest for their souls. But *here* this Faith is to be brought into connection with Science, i.e., with our other knowledge of natural, divine and human things ... (VI:409).

Revelation Reveals what is Beyond all Reason

Since the content of Revelation is not discoverable by Reason, it must lie beyond or outside Reason. Whence it follows that Reality is not completely rational! "Being" is a mixture of Reason and Unreason.

If we say that Reason is all Being (and therefore, inversely, if all Being is Reason), it is very difficult to come up with the Unreason which is needed for an explanation of the real world. For anyone can see that alongside a great and powerful Reason which seems to govern things in a certain way, a great and powerful portion of Unreason is mixed in with all Being. Reason, however, can never be anything but Reason. It cannot turn itself into something else, and (certainly not) into its

opposite. The first characteristic of Reason is to be the Unchanging (VI:415).

To say of man, as of God, that he acts rationally is a nice compliment. But for God, as for man, the practice of a magnanimity which goes *beyond* reason, is even nobler and, strange to say, is not necessarily incomprehensible. That "mystery" of Christianity which is "the subject and sole cause of Revelation" - namely, God's will with respect to man in his estrangement - is "beyond Reason". But this does *not* mean that the revelation of the divine decision is incomprehensible, for that decision "stands in a perfect relationship to the extraordinary character of the event to which it refers, as well as to the greatness of God" (VI:416).

Others, while not going so far as to say that the being of God is only the being of Reason, want at least a rational God who cannot act *beyond* Reason. But therewith they concede to God less than they concede to man, for even man is credited with being able to operate *beyond* Reason. To call a man rational is a fine compliment, but anyone can see that it does not say very much. It will be agreed that while every man does *not* possess heroism or faith, he does possess Reason. For man not only not to hate, and not to pursue his enemy, but to do him good and even to love him - this is *beyond* Reason. The highest precepts of a magnanimous ethic - one which elevates man - would be unfulfilled if man could not act *beyond* Reason. Why then should not God be able to act beyond Reason? (VI:415).

God cannot be caught in the nets of our logic. He is at once supra-rational and rational. Indeed, there is a profound irony in all divine behaviour. How foolish of God to have involved himself with a world! And yet, the foolishness of God is his wisdom; the divine weakness (for man) is stronger than man! "In Creation he shows the power of his *Spirit*, in Salvation he shows the greatness of his *heart*" (VI:418).

One can use Unreason as an objection against what *claims* to be ... rational, but not against what claims to be *beyond* all reason, and to have a content which could never enter any man's thoughts unless revealed to him, i.e., disclosed through reality. Even less could it be used against what puts itself forth as *foolishness*, i.e., foolishness from a certain standpoint of human judgment. Nothing is more wretched than the work of rationalists of every kind who want to make rational

what presents itself as beyond all reason. The most daring of the Apostles - and one may recognize here a profound dialectic - speaks simply of the divine foolishness, of the weakness of God which, he says, is stronger and more powerful than human wisdom and human strength (1 Cor 1:25). Only the strong can or may be weak.

With J. G. Hamann, one could answer the good-natured folk who simply must have a rational God in their sense, by asking if they have never yet noticed that God is an extraordinary creative genius (*Genie*) who cares little for what *they* call rational or non-rational. They are unable to grasp the profound irony of all divine behavior, and he who has not understood it from the beginning, in the creation of the world ... shall certainly not comprehend it later in the doctrine of redemption (VI:416).

... It is also against the law of contradiction that God, in the Creation, posits what he immediately proceeds to deny ... But the deity (i.e., the absolute freedom) of God consists precisely in the power of this contradiction - this absurdity, if you will, to be at the same moment the one who affirms and the one who denies, and yet not therewith to be divided but to remain who he is (VI:417).

To be Drunk and Sober at the Same Time

In man, too, there is this same contradiction: a blind productive power, limitless in its nature, standing - in the self-same subject - over against a sober power which limits and forms it and therefore literally negates it. Every spirit's work shows to the judicious observer whether it proceeds from a harmonious balance of that activity or whether one of the two preponderates. A preponderance of productive activity is present when the form seems too weak as compared with the content, so that the content partly overpowers the form. The opposite is the case wherever the form forces back the content so that the work lacks fullness.

The secret of true poetry is to be drunk and sober at the same time, not at different moments but at one and the same moment. This is what distinguishes the Apollonian enthusiasm from the merely Dionysiac. To present an infinite content - that is, a content which literally struggles against form and seems to destroy every form - to present such an infinite content in the most perfect, i.e., the most finite form: this is the highest task of art (VI:417).

In this distinctive comment on the nature of Art, Schelling sees the same "contradiction" in man - insofar as a spark of creative power has been granted him - as he sees in God. God knows perfectly how to be "drunk and sober at the same time." "He shows himself as the highest, artistic nature", for "he seeks the finite, and does not rest (so to speak) until he has brought everything into the most intelligible, most understandable, most finite form. The limitedness of Christianity, of which many speak, is precisely purpose, intention" (VI:417f).

Revelation is God's Gracious, Personal Act

Schelling's final word here is to stress again the crucial point that Revelation - or the deed which is its content - is simply the gracious, personal, and therefore astonishing, act of God.

One can see a divine foolishness in the fact that God got himself mixed up with a world, for in his eternal self-sufficiency he could have merely delighted in the pure contemplation of the world that was possible through him. But the weakness of God can be recognized especially in his weakness for man. And yet, in this weakness he is stronger than man. His heart is big enough for anything. In the Creation he shows, in particular, the power of his Spirit; in Salvation, the power of his heart. This is what I meant when I said that Revelation - or the deed which is the content of Revelation - is his personal act. For just as we say we do not know a man in his true self when we know only his spirit (for the latter is the more powerful the more it is to a certain extent impersonal and independent of him, i.e., independent of his will), just as we believe we know the man *himself* only when we are acquainted with the expressions of his heart, so the fact is that God became truly personal for man only in Revelation. Here he stands as a man over against man, and what Moses said - namely, that God has spoken to him not in vision or dream but face to face - is what Revelation really is. The relation characteristic of Revelation is an immediate and personal one.

But God stands infinitely higher above man than any individual man (no matter how great his spiritual stature) stands above another. It is only in this sense, then, that the dealings of God in Revelation are beyond all human comprehension - not that we cannot conceive them

at all, but that in order to conceive them we must have recourse to a standard which surpasses all ordinary human standards. Therefore, as I have already remarked, the astonishing thing loses none of this capacity to astonish simply because it is now understood. Furthermore, only such an absolutely-astonishing (deed) can bring to rest the interminable unrest of the human spirit. Only the recognition that something has happened than which nothing greater can happen, *quo majus nil fieri potest*, can bring us to a standstill. There must be a *finis quaerendi et inveniendi*, a goal at which the never-resting spirit rests, else all knowing would be vain, purposeless. Here there must come a time in the development of things when human knowledge, which possesses an infinite drive toward movement and advance, has to confess it can advance no further, i.e., when it is struck dumb (VI:418f).

C. The Task of the Philosophy of Revelation

The "True Object" of this Study

In the light of the presuppositions already discussed, Schelling is now explicit (in various ways) about the purpose of a Philosophy of Revelation. Its task, he says, is (i) to demonstrate the *uniqueness* of Revelation, by showing that it "lies beyond all necessary knowledge" and is "not a necessary product but the manifestation of the completely free and most personal will of God." Then, (ii) it must make *intelligible* that divine decision (*Entschluss*) which is "the proper subject and to that extent the single cause of all Revelation." This is not an attempt to "ground it *a priori*", for "if this decision were not already there, already *manifest*, no reason would dare, no reason could dare, to regard such a thing as possible. But it is possible to make it intelligible *after* it is there, and to do so in general and in detail." Hence, the task at hand is (iii) to explain that "higher history" of divine purpose and action which is the content and ultimate context of Revelation. We must "expand the smallness and narrowness of our thoughts to the greatness of the divine thought" (VI:403f, 419f, 422).

The *content* of Revelation is nothing but a higher history which goes back to the beginning of things and on to the end. The *Philosophy* of Revelation will simply explain this higher history and trace it back to the principles which are known and given to it from elsewhere (VI:422).

To accomplish this purpose, however, we must be able to assume "a real relation of human nature to God, not a merely ideal relation mediated through reason." Such a real relation is assumed "throughout the entire content of Revelation itself." Revelation is more than instruction. It brings a *new* relation of man to God. Now we know from the Philosophy of Mythology that man *has* a real relation to God before all Revelation. Hence the Philosophy of Mythology becomes the foundation for the Philosophy of Revelation (VI:420-422).

The Philosophy of Mythology has demonstrated that there *is* a real relation of the human creature to God before all Revelation. It has established this on so broad a basis that I may accept it as solidly established. Hence the chief ground of a Philosophy of Revelation is already established, and a revelation is no longer unintelligible at all ... The original relation of man to God is a *mediated* one. The Father created the world not directly but through the Son. The same mediation occurred in Revelation, but on a higher level and in a more definite and personal sense (VI:421).

It is the *fact* of Revelation that concerns us. Hence the Philosophy of Revelation "will not establish any actual doctrine or any speculative Dogmatic." It will be completely indifferent to ecclesiastical interests and the dogmatic debates of theologians - for the fact of Revelation is older than any dogma.

Since we are not proceeding dogmatically, we can intend no antithesis toward any dogma commonly maintained or accepted. Revelation itself is older than any dogma. And it is with Revelation that we will be dealing, not with the various ways of interpreting Revelation as these have made their presence felt in different periods.

Furthermore, I must expressly point out that we are not dealing with a proof, but only with an explanation of Christianity which we *presuppose* as fact, - of course as the highest and most decisive fact of all history ... Still, it is only as *fact* that it comes here into consideration. We are not at all discussing here Christianity as doctrine (VI:422, 426).

Critique of Earlier Interpretations of Revelation (VI:423-426)

Earlier methods of dealing with Revelation - namely, the approaches characteristic of Scholasticism, of the Reformation, and of Mysticism -

have been unsatisfactory, says Schelling. The dogmatic theologians of Scholasticism, in seeking "the means to express and make intelligible the content of Revelation", looked "not in Revelation itself but in the philosophy that existed outside Revelation." The result was a doctrine of Revelation which was almost wholly unhistorical. Later, with the reawakened historical spirit of the Reformation, there was a return to history, theology's natural soil, and a rejection of scholastic-dogmatic definitions. The historical sources of Revelation were now looked upon as alone authoritative. But Reformation theology, unfortunately, ran off to another extreme, and indulged a "purely external historical approach" which failed to understand the "deep inner historical method which is, at the same time, the truly scientific." This external-historical approach established "the trustworthiness of Christ and the Apostles" and the authenticity of the writings ascribed to them, and then proceeded "to show philologically-grammatically that this or that New Testament book contained this or that doctrine." "It was enough to be able to say: *Here it stands*" (in the Scriptures). The systematic understanding of the text was left up to each individual. A third approach, the mystical, had the merit of proclaiming the need for a true inner understanding of Revelation. But, in its piety, Mysticism acted "as if it wanted to produce the content of Revelation purely out of its inner illumination." Hence, it became arbitrary, and unclear, and offered what amounted to allegorical interpretations of Revelation. In the end, "Mysticism understands the historical as little as Rationalism does" (VI:423-425).

The New Testament Must Interpret Itself

These earlier approaches to Revelation all fail because they do not "understand the historical as historical." A true interpretation is not reductive or seductive. It does not distort, or impose its own philosophical or dogmatic preconceptions. Instead, it recognizes that "Christianity is first of all a fact which must be ascertained like any other purely historical fact". Then it allows the New Testament to speak for itself, and insists on understanding it in its own terms. Like every significant phenomenon, Christianity contains in itself the key to its own comprehension (VI:425, 626).

Now, this means eliciting *from the New Testament itself* that "larger context", that "higher history", in which Christianity appears as the highest and final moment. For Schelling is convinced that there is a

"system" hidden in the authentic sources of Christianity, one which is "everywhere presupposed but nowhere completely expressed." The discovery and exposition of that system will require "scholarly inquiry", "rigorous and precise criticism", and plain, unsophisticated speech. One must make even the "supernatural" appear "natural" (VI:425).

For the true system will be one which embodies all the particular suggestions and utterances of the scriptures without excluding one of them, and explains through this union. One must try to stay as closely as possible to the simplicity of these (biblical) statements and not, as most mystics have done, put into Christianity a pretentious wordiness which is completely strange to it ... It was noted long ago by true specialists like Pascal, that Christ and the Apostles speak of the most sublime things only in the simplest and most natural expressions.

With Christianity one should not ask: How am I to interpret it so as to bring it into agreement with a particular philosophy? One should ask: Of what kind must that philosophy be which can comprehend and take up Christianity into itself? ... I want now to consider Christianity in just the same way that I considered Mythology, namely, as a phenomenon which I want to make intelligible as much as possible out of its own premises. Hence, strictly speaking, I want to let it explain itself (VI:425f).

The Earthly History and the "Higher" History of Christ

The Philosophy of Revelation is concerned with the *history* of Christ in two senses of the word. First, Christ was an ordinary-historical figure - which is true of none of the other gods of the world's religions - and this demands an *historical*, not a mythical, explanation of Christianity.

As far as mythological representations are concerned, there is nothing historical about them other than the fact that they have been believed and regarded as true at a certain time among certain peoples. But we find no reason to ascribe an *historical* truth to the persons who are subjects of these representations. Even if we bear in mind that the actual theogonic potencies, and not mere representations, are active in the mythological process, and on this ground accept actual theophanies among the Pagans, still the gods do not thereby become historical persons. But Christ is no mere appearance. He lived like any

other man, was born and died, and his historical existence is attested as strongly as that of any other historical person. The phenomenon of Christianity falls so clearly in the period of attested history, that to my knowledge it has not occurred to anyone in Germany to deny that such a Christ existed (VI:621f).

Secondly, however, Schelling is equally insistent that the "higher history" of Christ be not reduced to merely ordinary history. Those who grant the historic existence of Christ, but proceed to hold that Jesus received "mythical glorification" at the hands of his disciples, are guilty of a completely subjective historical explanation. Such a view has enjoyed "much favor in recent years", observes Schelling, but he points out that he "and many others" had thought about such an hypotheses "more than forty years ago" (VI:623f).³ He rejects it because he finds it simply unbelievable. "How did this country Rabbi come to be the subject of such a glorification?" Through his teaching? But its ethical content was paralleled among the better Jewish teachers, and its *chief* content - the proclamation of his divine mission and Sonship - was not believed "by the vast majority of his people." He was rejected, not glorified (VI:624f, 427).

The truth, for Schelling, is just the reverse of the above hypothesis. The *higher* history of Christ *precedes* his *earthly* history and makes it intelligible, explaining many of the gospel stories which, "dogmatically, one could call myths." Ordinary historical-critical discussion of the Scriptures is irrelevant here:

For Christ's sovereignty is completely independent of these stories - which are in many respects, of course, quite arbitrary! It is not grounded in them, but precedes them. *They* are not necessary in order to recognize the sovereignty of Christ, but to the contrary, the sovereignty of Christ - as we have defined it - is necessary to comprehend the stories, the gospels (VI:625).

Philosophy, History and Mythology

Appropriately, Schelling now offers "a few remarks about the nature of Philosophy". He sees Philosophy as no longer preoccupied with "the pure subject." Whereas Fichte once could posit the non-Ego as non-existent, and Kant could "honorably pension off the thing-in-itself" (Jacobi's phrase), Philosophy *now* is once again taking seriously the *real* world of Nature and History. Indeed, a philosophy which does

not take historical reality seriously will end up fabricating its own history, and denying the actual continuity of culture. Philosophy must deal with Reality as it is; and this means it must deal with Christianity as real history. Some are at a loss to know how to handle Christianity, for they cannot assimilate it to their notions of what history should be, and therefore ignore, distort or dismiss it. But "we can neither undo Christianity nor undo what has happened as a result of it." It produced the most profound change the world has ever seen. Hence we must recognize it as a fact, as real as the forms of the natural world, and make it the object of philosophical understanding (VI:409f ,414f).

But as soon as Philosophy turns to History, it must recognize that History begins in Mythology, that "first and most ancient thing ... without which one could find neither a beginning of history nor a transition to Christianity." Mythology is "the key to the past", and also the key to the present, for the present is built on the past: Mythology is "a necessary moment in the determination of the *present* spiritual state of man" (VI:411).

Christianity presupposes Mythology

The present state of human consciousness is "thoroughly conditioned by Christianity", and Christianity, whatever its mysterious *source* may be, is "a historical phenomenon" whose *effects* are entirely visible. The first "historical effect" of Christianity was its triumph over Paganism, a fact that implies, first, that Paganism must have been open and receptive to the influence of Christianity, and second, that the power and reality of Paganism is a measure of the power and reality of its conqueror. Hence, for both theologian and student of history, a true understanding of Christianity must rest on a true understanding of Paganism. In other words, a Philosophy of Revelation must presuppose a Philosophy of Mythology.

The proud power of Paganism bowed before the despised Cross. Its temples were overturned, its oracles struck dumb. How will this greatest of all revolutions be understood if one does not find the cause in the nature of Paganism (Mythology) by virtue of which it was capable of receiving that influence of Christianity and hence made possible such inner dissolution and destruction?

The first, most obvious and most immediate effect of Christianity ... was precisely the freeing of mankind from that power of darkness

which, in Paganism stretched its rule over the world. It follows from this, however, that in the last analysis the reality of Christianity ... cannot be recognized unless in a certain way the reality of Paganism is recognized first. For as I said earlier, the reality of a liberation is judged or defined in terms of the reality of that from which freedom is won; and *therefore*, a true understanding of Christianity ... is not possible without a prior Philosophy of Mythology (VI:412).

It is *still* important, in Schelling's view, for Christians and Christian missionaries to truly understand Paganism. His comments here reflect the situation in his day. First of all, Paganism still persists; in fact, it is predominant.

According to the most recent reckonings, the total number of monotheists, i.e., Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, is 344 millions; the number of polytheists is 656 millions. Even if there is a mistake here - inasmuch as the latest contention (e.g., by Balbis) is that the common assumption that there are 1,000 million people in the world is too great - still the result remains, viz., that the number of polytheists far exceeds the number of monotheists (VI:413).

Present-day Paganism, however, is judged by Schelling to be "faded, withered, dead in its roots". It "brings forth nothing new." This poses a special problem for Christian missionaries, for their success depends on their ability to enter into non-Christian religious perspectives and discover points of contact with Christianity.

The pagan peoples are, so to speak, dead members of history, no longer participating in it in a living, active way ... One must once again put life into Paganism in order not to have to confront it as a dead and therefore unconquerable mass - or at least one must know how to find and uncover those points in it in terms of which it is still connected with the real and true religion.

There is no doubt that one of the noteworthy moral phenomena of our time is the great general support of missions, i.e., the attempt to lead the peoples who are still held fast in Paganism over to Christian ideas and convictions. But quite a different result could be expected from this meritorious and praiseworthy undertaking if it were supported by

deeper insights into the *sources* of Mythology, and hence of Paganism, than is the case - according to previous experience - with the majority of missionaries. Most of them, as some admit, cannot put themselves in the soul of a pagan, or enter into the thought-world of a Hindu Brahmin. And since they are able to see in pagan ideas only *illusions* and *lies*, they can find no entry into the imagination of these men. Pagans, for their part, must always find the purely literal and formal content of ecclesiastical orthodoxy to be absolutely strange. We cannot blame intelligent and wise Hindus if they refuse to feign a faith in formulae which, from their point of view, agree with nothing in their own Faith or world view, nothing in *their* philosophy or wisdom (VI:413f cf. 621).

D. An Outline of the Content of Revelation

Schelling repeatedly describes and summarizes the content of Revelation, and a limited amount of this repetition is included here. But first, we must state his theses in their simplest terms.

Revelation = Christianity = Christ

In essence, Revelation is Christianity and Christianity is Christ! More specifically, Schelling will propose the following theses: (i) Revelation is Christianity (the opposite of Mythology or Paganism), (ii) the Old Testament is Christianity in prophecy and anticipation, (iii) the essential content of Christianity is the Person of Christ, hence (iv) the supreme task confronting the Philosophy of Revelation is the understanding of the Person of Christ.

We understand by Revelation, which we consider to be the opposite of Mythology or Paganism, nothing but Christianity; for the Old Testament Revelation is only Christianity in prophecy and anticipation, insofar as the Old Testament is comprehended only in and through Christianity. The real (*eigentliche*) content of Christianity, however, is purely and simply the *Person* of Christ. At the same time, Christ is the bond between the Old and New Testaments, for the sole final content of the Old Testament is the Messiah. Hence one can say: in a Philosophy of Revelation the issue is essentially that of comprehending the Person of Christ. Christ is not the Teacher, as the saying goes, He is not the Founder (of Christianity), he is the *content* of Christianity (VI:427).

Everywhere the New Testament regards Christ as of more than "purely human or ordinary-historical significance." In fact, it ascribes to him a prehuman, even a pre-worldly, existence. And the only way to take this view seriously is to recognize the reality of a *supra*-historical history in terms of which such a personality as the New Testament Christ can be comprehended. Hence the problem of understanding Christ becomes the problem of understanding his status and "higher history" *before* his historical appearance as Christ (VI:427 cf. 621f).

The Fundamental Motif of Christianity

The historical appearance of the second divine Personality as Christ marks the birth of Christianity. And *the fundamental motif of Christianity* is that of the preexistent divine Son, who possessed his own sovereignty independently of the father (though ultimately it was derived from him), but refused to exercise his lordship and chose, instead, the form of a servant and the death of the cross.

It is Schelling's claim that the preexistent "history" of Christ (the second or mediating potency) becomes intelligible when it is presented in terms of those distinctions elaborated in the Pure Rational Philosophy (The Second Book, above). The same "higher history" can be demonstrated from the Scriptures, especially the Pauline and Johannine literature. But here are two statements of this supra-historical history in metaphysical terms.

The Higher History of the Second Divine Potency

- (a) That divine personality which we have defined as the second, was in the creation *mere* potency, as that which is begotten is only potency so long as it has not yet realized itself. Being was originally possessed only by the Father who alone, therefore, is original God. - The divinity of the Son is everywhere recognized as something derived from the Father. In this sense, Christian theology calls the Father *fontem et principium divinitatis*. At the end of the creation, however, the Son is what the Father is; for he possesses being. He possesses it, to be sure, not as the Father does, originally, but as something given to him, i.e., as the Son. Yet this being is not a being independent of the Father, not a being which is *proper* to the Son or which he would possess outside the Father and for himself.

But through man's guilt that principle (in whose conquest the Son had realized himself) which was overcome in the creation, is again aroused, and with it is posited a new tension which is distinguished from the earlier tension (in the Creation) by the fact that it is not a *divine* principle, but is posited purely by man and against the divine Will. Man has usurped the *exclusively* divine right to call forth that potency which forms the basis of all things and which brings all things about - to call forth again the beginning of creation itself out of inwardness and hiddenness - to make external again the mystery of creation, so to speak.

But by usurping the generative (fatherly) potency's (function) in this way, *he* [man!] *appointed himself* - the Father⁴, i.e., the one who posits the Son. But this means that the Son is in a being independent vis-a-vis the Father, a being which he previously did not have. He is posited outside dependence on the Father - not inwardly, but outwardly. It cannot be meant that he inwardly, in himself, lost the consciousness of his divinity, or ceased to know himself as divine Personality or as Personality (period!). But that he still recognizes his inward dependence on the Father, and wills nothing but the will of the Father, makes no difference to the fact of his external independence.

In this being which is independent of the Father, he is at first nothing but potency, and must act as such. The potency must do what it is compelled to do by the inner necessity of its nature. For the relation between B and A² is, as you know, this: if B is conceived to be in a state of mere potency, then A² is *actus purus*; but if B rises or is raised *ad actum*, then A² becomes potency, unmediated potency, i.e., potency which can have only one will, viz., to restore itself in the *actus purus*, by overcoming what is opposed to it.

The Son, therefore, becomes again the one who *must* work, as in the creation. A *new* process is posited, a process in the human consciousness, for everything now proceeds in the latter and depends on it alone, for only in (the human consciousness) is the B raised again. At the end of this process - the Mythological process - the mediating potency had restored itself *ex potentia in actum* and therewith became *Lord of being* (first of human consciousness, but thereby of being in general). And because it had once again come into possession of being - into sovereignty - it also reestablished itself in its *divinity*, though not

in *true* divinity - for it can possess true divinity only in community with the Father from whom it is still separated. But it is at least *εἰς μορφήν θεοῦ* - to use an expression of an Apostle, not true God, but in the *form* of God, for in form it *is* Lord, and it can be God *actu*. This is the moment in which we ... must think the mediating potency before it appears *as* Christ.

It is absolutely *necessary* for the understanding of Christianity - the *conditio sine qua non* of perceiving its true meaning - that we comprehend this *cutting-off* of the Son from the Father, (the cutting-off) of this being which is in his own form and hence in complete *freedom* and independence of the Father. Not only are numerous passages and expressions in the New Testament (with which we shall soon deal) unintelligible without this positing of the Son prior to Christianity (the appearance of the second potency as Christ) - a positing of the Son outside the Father and independent of him - but the whole economy of the New Testament, the whole meaning of the Christian event, is similarly unintelligible without it (VI:429-431).

- (b) We know from world times a demiurgic personality, a potency which mediates the creation, and which becomes actual at the end of creation as Lord of being, hence as the divine personality. (Then) man returns it again to latency, robbing it of its sovereignty. Of course, this does not mean that it ceases therewith to be a divine personality *in itself*. Inwardly it is not changed. Its will, its consciousness, is the same. But vis-a-vis the newly aroused principle (the principle which should not be), it is again in the state of negation and suffering. Confronted by this being to which it once again has to subject itself, it is no longer a Lord but, first of all, just a potency which acts in a merely *natural* way. For the principle which should not be has arisen only in order to be once again subjected to it [the second divine potency] - through a process from which it cannot extricate itself because it is in the power of man [i.e., man aroused B, the contra-divine principle which should-not-be, in the Fall]. It cannot be denied that apart from this (second potency) human consciousness would have had to surrender completely, and been brought to nought, destroyed. But this is against the hidden but still divine will of (the second potency), just as it is against the will of the Father who does not want the world to be lost.

But now comes the moment [at the end of the Mythological process] when (the second potency) makes itself, in human consciousness,

again Lord of that being, the moment when it once more has a sovereignty and therefore becomes *to that extent* once more (externally) a divine personality. But it is a divine personality as Lord over the being which the Father has *not* given it, the being which it possesses independently of the Father. In this way it is itself *independent* of the Father and hence, in this moment, it is to be defined, as far as its being is concerned, as an *extra-divine divine personality* - as 'divine', since it is Lord of being; as 'extra-divine', since it possesses this being as something *not* given it by God. Since it possesses it independently of the Father, it can do with it what it will, and could possess it *permanently* as something independent of the Father. *Therein* lies its freedom. *That* is what one must know if one is to understand that *obedience* of Christ of which so much is said and on which, at the same time, so much store is set. The Son *could* exist in *his own* sovereignty independently of the Father. To be sure, he could not be the *true* God outside the Father, but he could be *God*, i.e., Lord of being, outside of and without the Father. In other words, he could be God not essentially, but actually (not *dem Wesen nach*, but *actu*). The Son, however, rejected *this* sovereignty which he could have had independently of the Father, and *therein* is he Christ. *That* is the fundamental theme of Christianity (VI:428f).⁵

The Reality of the Fall and of the Contra-divine Principle

The principle (B) which formed the ground of Creation, comes to self-consciousness in man, is set free by man, begins to exist in its own power, and so becomes the principle of a new possible movement. (All of this was intended by God). But in man, who "wants to be like God, the unity of the potencies is merely secondary, creaturely and therefore dissoluble. If he is = B, it is not given to him to be the other potencies as well." When the principle (B) is set free, it is not for man the beginning of life (i.e., a continuing free movement): it is *death*. The principle (B) is aroused by *man* (it does not posit itself), hence it is "that which should not be" and is against the divine Will. Can God, then, be in it? He *must* be in it, says Schelling, "for it does not cease to be a divine power (*Kraft*), and if God is not in it everywhere it would be nothing at all." But if God is not in it with his *Will*, he must be in it with his *Unwill* (VI:443f).

He is in it in the sense theology has in mind when it teaches that the power (*Kraft*) with which even the sinner operates and by which evil is

perpetrated is still a divine power [Cf. Ps 18:26f] ... Man has perverted the position of the potencies, and so God operates perversely in the perverse, i.e., he no longer acts as fatherly Will, but as Unwill ... (Even in the godless, God is, but outside his divinity ... Something can be *materially in God and yet outside God as such*) (VI:444).

The principle which really *should not be*, is, in terms of its substance, the divine Unwill, but for that very reason it is now that which *should be*. For example, in capital punishment as such we have that which *ought not to be*, for the divine command says: thou shalt not kill. But since in capital punishment there is expressed the Unwill of the law which is regarded as something holy, so this which ought-not-to-be is, in this way, right, and is 'that which should be' (VI:445).

Just as the very law which forbids killing sanctions killing, so the principle which ought not to be has a *right* to be, for the divine Unwill is in it and sanctions it. And God "is much too just violently to destroy anything which exists legitimately." This perversion, however, will destroy man if a new mediation is not found. How, then, can this being which opposes God be reconciled to God?

For it is the curse of the all-highest which fell upon the human consciousness. The Unprinciple is now, precisely on account of this divine Unwill, that which *should be* (as explained above). It is the principle of his wrath which God *must* deal with. Since he can have no relation of the will to it, he must *affirm* it as his Unwill ... otherwise it would be posited entirely outside his power - which is unthinkable. Yet this Unwill of God is ... a will of indignation, strange to him, hence, strictly speaking, independent of him ... Therefore, of himself or directly, he can no more negate this will than posit it (VI:447f).

Reconciliation in Christ through Man's Religions

The exclusive function of the mediating potency - in which the Creator placed his *true or proper Will* - is to bring back what is posited outside God, and to reduce to non-being that Unprinciple which contains the divine Unwill and which is therefore just "a divine dissimulation." To accomplish this, the mediating potency must dissociate itself, at least externally, from God (becoming thus an extra-divine potency) and go after the estranged being to effect a reconciliation.

In all man's religions apart from Christianity, this mediating potency (= Christ before he appeared *as* Christ) has been at work, but it has accomplished only "a purely apparent and external" reconciliation, a neutralization merely of the *effect* of the opposed principle (the Unprinciple of consciousness).

The process, in which the mediating potency operates as an extra-divine, purely *natural* potency, is itself an undivine process which is not a *true* reconciliation because it negates the contra-divine principle only in its effect (*Wirkung*) not in its root or potency. Hence its *right* remains, for if I have a right I may abstain from exercising it without therefore losing it. Here is the most important point of our whole study ...

We have explained the whole of Mythology on the basis of this successive overcoming. On the other hand, the existence of Mythology is a factual proof of the process of that conquest (VI:446, cf. 471).

To overcome the Unprinciple in its potency or ultimate ground, to negate its *right* to be, to placate and reconcile the divine Unwill, to win "true, inner mediation and authentic peace with God", the mediating potency must *negate itself*, the Son must sacrifice himself. This required a *will* "far surpassing the merely natural will" by which the contra-divine being was overcome. It took "an absolutely supernatural and therefore truly divine will - not only to restore that being to its essence but also to sacrifice itself as extra-divine God."

Only when it negates itself in its independence from God can (the mediating potency) cancel out that Unprinciple inwardly and in its right, so that not merely its operation but even its power is broken ...

Just as the first, i.e., the external and natural conquest of the contrary principle is the event and content of Paganism, so in the other conquest (in which the potency which was *victorious* in Paganism, finally sacrifices *itself* as extra-divine) is the content of Revelation and Christianity (VI:450f).

Sovereignty of the Son and Final Restoration of Divine Unity

Because the *will* of the second potency (i.e., the Son, or Christ) *is* to restore the estranged world (and himself) to the Father, the Father has made him Lord of this fallen world.

This *will*, by virtue of which the Son pursues the being which turned away from God, but only in order to bring it back and return it to God along with himself - *this will*, by virtue of which the Son, even in his separation from the Father, is nevertheless one with the Father - *this will* to negate not merely the opposing being but also with it to negate himself as an extra-divine being - this will is the *reason* that from the time of the Fall, i.e., from the time the world became extra-divine (in the sense of the Latin *extra*), the Father was moved to hand over *this* being completely to the Son (VI:453).⁶

During the present world-age, the Son has exclusive Lordship over the extra-divine being, but at the end of this age he delivers it back to the Father "as a divine being acceptable and reconciled to him." As 1 Cor 15:24-28 puts it:

Then comes the end when the Son shall deliver the Kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet ... 'For God has put all things in subjection under his feet'. But when it says, 'All things are put in subjection under him', it is plain that he is excepted that put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Although this passage speaks of the Son's subjection to the Father, the prior condition of this subordination is that everything be subject to the Son! Hence, "the Son shall be subordinated to the Father only by virtue of the fact that, and insofar as, he himself is God, i.e., Lord over all." The passage teaches only the end of the Son's *exclusive* sovereignty over the world during this present age, and "not the end of the Lordship of the Son in general." The Son's reconciling activity must be "perpetual, and in this sense, eternal", for the Father possesses the world *only* through the action of the Son, "only as something overcome by the Son continually in its Un-divinity." Hence, Paul is pointing to "joint sovereignty as the final necessary outcome" (VI:453-456).

The Son *cannot* continue to be outside the Father after the being, in connection with which *alone* he is outside the Father, has ceased

through him himself to be an extra-divine being ... The *moment* in which the Son subjected all being to *himself* is precisely the moment in which all being returns to the Father. But the Son himself must, *in* that moment and *with* that being, return to the Father (VI:456).

To make this outcome as intelligible as possible, Schelling offers several recapitulations, which I summarize here. (a) In the beginning, and up until the Fall, the being of Father and Son were one. We can say that the Son here is *subordinate* to the Father, inasmuch as "subordination" means "having no will of his own," "no movement independent of the Father," "no freedom vis-a-vis the Father." (b) The Fall, however, "brought it about that the Son had his *own* will" and became "not an independent God, but a personality independent of the Father", (although it operated, before Christianity, only as a natural potency). The Son did not *will* this independent status, is unsullied by it, and remains *inwardly* one with the Father, conscious of his original state and wanting only to restore it again. *Outwardly*, however, he is oriented toward the estranged world - hence "an extra-divine, inwardly-divine personality", a true Mediator. (c) Now, "after overcoming the anti-divine being", the Son "surrenders this independent personality and returns again into subordination to the Father, becoming again, for that very reason, what the Father is, namely, God." But this final subordination is something different from the initial subordination, for "now the son returns as an independent personality into the Father - something he could not be in the beginning" (VI:457, 451f).

So when "the brilliant Apostle", St. Paul, in "one of the most profound words in the New Testament", declares that in the end God will be all in all (*παντα εν πασι*), he is not giving us Pauline "pantheism", but "the most enhanced, most sublime, monotheism, which we may look upon as the outcome of our whole previous development" (VI:458). For what Paul says of the Son can also be said of the third potency, the Spirit, and brings us face to face with the Trinity (*Dreieinheit*) of God, that is, with the Christian idea of the Trinity. "There are now not merely three persons in general, God is not merely in three personalities, but there are three persons *each* of whom is God." Before the Fall, "*Ev το παν*", i.e., One (the Father) is all. After the reconciliation, "*παν το Ev*", i.e., each is the One, i.e., each person is God (VI:457f).

The Doctrine of the Trinity (VI:458-465)

Characteristically, Schelling understands the Trinity not in a purely logical or dogmatic way, but "historically".

The Trinity-idea passes through three moments: It must pass from *Tautousia*, where properly speaking only the Father is the ruling ousia - where all is enclosed in the father - through *Heterousia*, which persists during the tension and until the final reconciliation, to *Homousia*, the last moment, incomprehensible without the two preceding moments ...

With these three moments are presented, at the same time, the so-called *heresies* as *necessary* moments of the true idea. *Tautousia* (in which the Father is all and all is in the Father) corresponds to *Sabellianism*. *Heterousia* corresponds, to some extent, to Arianism, which is based only on those passages in the New Testament where the Son is incontestably recognized as a divine personality outside the Father. Arianism goes too far only in that it makes the Son the creature. Without this excess, Arianism represents a necessary moment of the true view ... Arianism takes the Son's being-outside-of-God, which is a matter of only one specific moment, as the absolute, universal doctrine. Thereby it becomes heresy. For heresy means that a particular meaning poses as universal, i.e., a meaning which represents only a specific, particular moment presumes to put itself forward as the whole. The moment of *Heterousia* is absolutely necessary if the threeness is not to become, in the last moment, purely nominal. This transition into a purely nominal threeness can be prevented only if the three have been once really outside one another and actually independent of one another.

Christian doctrine has experienced its greatest difficulty in trying to find an expression for the real distinction between Father and Son, one which prevents the transition into a purely nominal unity, without slipping over into ... polytheism. The root of this difficulty lies in the fact that the traditional discussion does not recognize an extra-divine being of the Son (and of the Spirit). It is precisely this *substantial* difference which brings it about that subsequently in the unity (which is no longer merely the *first* unity restored), the three can not only be distinguished from one another, but can be conceived as actually independent personalities (VI:458-459).

The notorious difficulty of satisfactorily stating the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, has always been due to the fact that "a middle course must be steered between the two rocks of 'too much' and 'too little' (as Athanasius called them)."

At the end of the Eleventh Century, when Roscelin called the three persons *tres res sive realitates*, Anselm objected. But when Anselm called the three personalities *tres relationes in una substantia*, he himself fell under suspicion (VI:459).

If forced to choose, Schelling would prefer so-called Tri-theism, for "merely nominal three-ness without any actual plurality explains nothing", whereas so-called Tri-theism could make a great deal intelligible and "remains far closer to the sense and the whole institution of Christianity" (VI:461f). Those accused of the heresy of Tritheism - "men like the brilliant Aristotelian, Joannes Philoponus (at the end of the 6th Century)", "the famous Abbot Joachim of Flores" and Bishop Gilbert de la Porree - were getting at something fundamentally important. They were laying "the chief emphasis on plurality" in the Godhead.

Strictly speaking, they posit *first* of all, i.e., without prior unity, hence to the exclusion of *our* first moment (*Tautousia*), the plurality: Father, Son and Spirit. Each is posited as an essence existing for itself and independent of the others, but not as an independently existing God. They *actually* affirmed only the first proposition. Never did one of their opponents ascribe to them the second [which would have meant literal tri-theism]. So we must concede that they denied this, and argued in the following fashion: Neither is the Father himself God without the Son and the Spirit, nor is the Son as such God without the Father and the Spirit; therefore, since each is God only in community with the others, they are, although several beings (*Wesen*), nevertheless only one God. This they expressed briefly by saying: they are not one according to the substance, but one only according to the divinity. But this, as such, is an unobjectionable expression ...

The chief mistake of the 'Tritheists' lay not in what they affirmed but in what they excluded, namely, that prior unity which, as prior, can be called nothing but a substantial unity - although, subsequently, after the substantial difference has emerged, it rises to the *supra*-substantial by virtue of and in relation to the *substantial* difference ... (VI:461f).

For Schelling, no expression of the Trinitarian dogma has ever or can ever achieve precision and significance unless the separateness of the moments is clearly recognized.

Heterousia is necessarily comprehended in *Homousia* (the third moment). Without it, the latter would be mere *Tautousia*. The strongest followers of Athanasius admit this, and even Athanasius himself ... remarked: the same cannot be *homousisch* to the same but only to another; it is to the same not *homousisch* but *tautousisch*. This is accomplished by our exposition. When the tension is completely overcome and the Son has returned into or under the Father, thus becoming *what* the Father is (and also the Spirit), each of the three persons are *homousisch* to the others but not *tautousisch* (since what is substantial in each is the same and only the exponent, so to speak, of this element in each is another) (VI:462f).

From this standpoint, "the three persons can be conceived as successive rulers, as the three rulers of successive times."

The time before Creation is in a special sense the time of the Father, since being is still exclusively in *his* hand. The present time is in a particular sense the time of the Son ... The third time, which during the whole creation is *future* and to which everything is supposed to arrive, is the time of the Spirit.

Thus it is permissible to think of the three persons as the successive rulers of the three ... great world-ages - (1) the time of the exclusive power of the Father, (2) the time of the present Creation in which being is handed over to the exclusive power ... of the Son, (3) the time in which time will be no more, i.e., the time which is eternity. One can call these three times 'eternal' in contradistinction to what is usually called 'time' but is only one member of this great sequence of times, i.e., purely temporal time (=A) which is but a member of true, absolute time ... The 17th Century Angelo Silesius has this among his epigrams:

*Der Vater war zuvor, der Sohn ist noch zur Zeit
Der Geist wird endlich sein am Tag der Herrlichkeit*

This epigram is to be understood ... as a number of thoughtful men of the Middle Ages understood it when they concluded from the fact that

the Old Testament was the time of the Father, and the time of the New Testament the time of the Son - hence particular times, repeating in narrower circles the higher and more general times - that a third economy, a third time, was at hand: the time of the Spirit which was to bring the eternal gospel ... as Abbot Joachim of Flores held. Perhaps this use which Joachim made of the Trinity doctrine, when he represented the three persons, so to speak, as the exponents or potencies of three successive times, presented the opportunity to accuse him of Tri-theism ...

For us, that succession has the further and general meaning that everything, i.e., the whole creation, i.e., the whole great development of things, proceeds from the Father - through the Son - into the Spirit ... Not that the sovereignty of the Father and the Son then ceases, but simply that the sovereignty of the Spirit is added to that of the Father and the Son. But therewith this sovereignty is perfectly revealed and actualized. For what John says of the individual man: the divine indwelling is perfected in man when the Spirit is added, is valid also of the whole. The 'Day of Glory' is the day of the common glorification of Father, Son and Spirit (VI:463ff).