# THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHLEIERMACHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHLEIERMACHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

By

# Ronald Edward Benson

Misunderstandings of the concept of religion developed by Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) reflect a failure to appreciate its development as a response to a particular cultural setting. A survey of the important events in Schleiermacher's life illustrates his relationship to certain philosophical, religious, and literary movements representative of the Prussian tradition. These formative experiences, combined with his sensitive perception of that cultural milieu, decisively affected his progress toward the explication of a constructive philosophy of religion.

Schleiermacher's education, experiences and personal associations brought him into contact with characteristic philosophies of religion in eighteenth-century Germany. Philosophy and theology were interrelated in rational orthodoxy. The ascendancy of reason without revelation in the Enlightenment generated support for natural religion and

Kant's ethical religion. A protest against the excessive dependence on reason became manifested in Moravian pietism, the "faith and feeling" philosophers, and the literary circle of the Berlin Romantics. The emergence of Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion reflects his intimate acquaintance with these divergent cultural currents.

Critiques of Schleiermacher which judge his thought primarily in terms of twentieth-century issues frequently obscure both Schleiermacher's intention and contribution. His attention to apologetics originated with his perception of the need to define the essence of religion sui generis in the light of the alternatives he perceived in the context of his culture. He attempted to transcend both the inadequacies of traditional Christian approaches and the misconceptions about religion held by nonbelievers. The common conceptions of religion, as either the knowledge of supernatural truths or the enactment of ethical ideals. Schleiermacher regarded as unviable options which compromised the distinctiveness of religion. Defining religion as the consciousness or feeling of being absolutely dependent on God, Schleiermacher viewed the content of theology as derived from particular states of God-consciousness wherein the Infinite is experienced in the finite.

If Schleiermacher is correct, any successful reconstruction of Christian dogmatics must depend on a careful re-examination of basic presuppositions concerning

the nature of religion. Schleiermacher's attempt to locate a sense of religion <u>sui generis</u> suggests a step which may preclude some unnecessary complications in the philosophy of religion which accompany unexamined preconceptions about the essence of religion.

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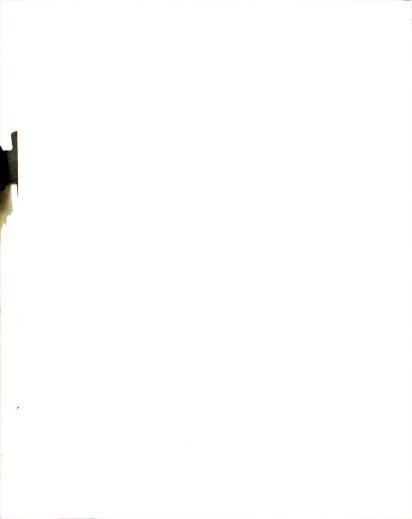
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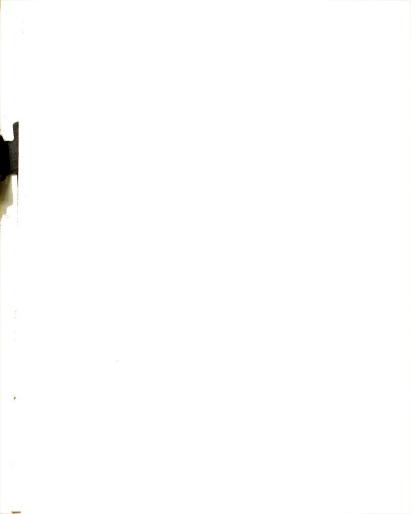
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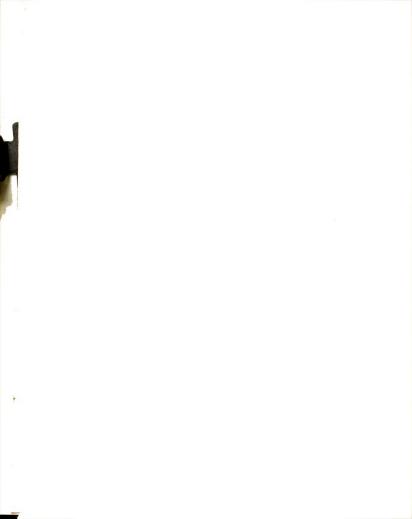
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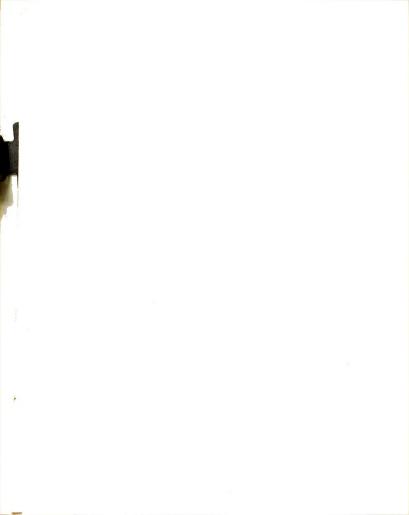
#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Study at Drew University between 1958 and 1961 was influential in the choice of the subject for this dissertation. Dr. John D. Godsey, Professor of Systematic Theology, introduced the writings of Schleiermacher to me for the first time. Dr. John Dillenberger, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, stimulated my interest in the significant combination of philosophical, religious and historical dimensions of thought. Schleiermacher appeared to be a promising choice in considering a subject for interdisciplinary study.

I am deeply appreciative of the help provided by members of the Michigan State University faculty who directed my study. I wish to thank Dr. Robert T. Anderson, Associate Professor of Religion, and Dr. Donald N. Baker, Associate Professor of History, for their personal interest and assistance. I am grateful for the opportunity to have Dr. Paul M. Hurrell, Professor of Philosophy, and chairman of my Guidance Committee, as my teacher again. While an undergraduate at Michigan State University, Dr. Hurrell guided my first academic study in the philosophy of



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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

The early nineteenth century theologian, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, has been the subject of extensive study by several generations of scholars. Controversies have centered around the views of this prolific writer since the days of his distinguished career as university professor and preacher. His unique background and the diverse activities of his life combined to create in him an unusually astute awareness of the intellectual currents of his time. Schleiermacher was a man of the world who had many significant experiences and associations.

Aside from some skepticism at certain times during his youth, Schleiermacher considered himself unequivocally a Christian. In his presentation of the Christian message he was conscious of the need to express ancient truths in relevant thought-forms capable of being communicated effectively in the modern age. Schleiermacher is noted for the creative manner in which he synthesized Christian tradition with the modern mind. He claimed that theology is developed from an empirical description of human states

of God-consciousness which exist in Christians at particular times. This emphasized the subjective and experiential aspects of religion in contrast to orthodoxy's claim for an absolute, timeless truth supplied by divine revelation. Subsequently liberal theologians further developed this appreciation for spiritual values relative to the contemporary culture.

It was Schleiermacher's preoccupation with apologetics which drew the ire of orthodox thinkers. Schleiermacher was concerned about the low regard in which religion was held by the educated and cultured people he knew. Since he was convinced that religion was an essential ingredient of human life, he labored to overcome the offenses that prevented his friends from experiencing fully the spiritual dimensions of human existence. As a propaedeutic to proclaiming the Christian gospel, Schleiermacher discussed the role of religion separately.

His endeavor to propound a revised concept of religion involved transcending both the inadequacy of the traditional Christian approach and the misconceptions of religion held by disbelievers. Schleiermacher affirmed that religion represented an indispensable dimension of human experience distinct from that of any other discipline which might appear in an enlightened era to be a surrogate for religion. He defined religion as the consciousness or feeling of being absolutely dependent on God. Schleiermacher explained that specific modifications

of the feeling of absolute dependence determine particular historical religions. Schleiermacher's treatment of "religion" did not represent an abrogation of Christianity inasmuch as he did not devote serious attention to other world religions. Furthermore, he held very high regard for the Church and the importance of affiliation by the individual with corporate, religious fellowship.

# Aim and Scope

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine Schleiermacher's concept of religion as it was developed within the framework of the particular cultural context of Berlin around 1800. A survey of the important events in Schleiermacher's life illustrates his relationship to certain contemporary literary, philosophical and religious movements of his time and suggests an evolution of thought influenced by his association with them. Greater detail for the earlier years emphasizes the formative experiences that affected his progress toward his mature explication of a constructive philosophy of religion. Attention is devoted to his perception of the cultural context out of which he developed a new definition of religion. Schleiermacher's notable achievements in Christian dogmatics and his life-long preoccupation with philology and philosophy per se are excluded from direct and detailed examination. His encounter with philosophy is discussed insofar as philosophy relates to the general background and contributes specifically to his philosophy of religion. Likewise, extensive analysis of Schleiermacher's role as an ecclesiastical leader, zealous patriot and governmental adviser in Prussia, and contributor to the philosophy of education and pedagogy is not presented.

# Critical Evaluations

Johann August Wilhelm Neander, Schleiermacher's colleague on the theological faculty at the University of Berlin, remarked to his students at the time of Schleiermacher's death, "In days to come a new period in church history will be dated from him." The title of an early twentieth century essay acclaimed Schleiermacher as "the church-father of the nineteenth century." These judgments reflect a broad consensus among theologians in the century following his death. The illustrious Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), whom many consider likely to be ranked as the church-father of twentieth century Protestantism, portrays Schleiermacher as a "hero" whose greatness

Quoted in Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1967), p. 156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Christian Luelmann, "Schleiermacher, der Kirchenvater des 19. Jahrhunderts" in <u>Sammlung gemeinverstaend-licher Vortraege und Schriften</u>, <u>Nr. 48</u> (Tuebingen, 1907).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Karl Barth, <u>Protestant Thought:</u> <u>From Rousseau</u> to <u>Ritschl</u> (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 308.

transcends the accolades and imitation of any one particular group of admiring followers.

It has often been pointed out that Schleiermacher did not found any one school. . . . Schleiermacher's significance lies beyond the beginnings of a school in his name. What he said of Frederick the Great in his Academy address entitled "What goes to make a great man" applies also to himself: "He did not found a school, but an era."

"Church-father of the Nineteenth (and also of the Twentieth!?) Century."<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher's eminence should be stated more accurately and specifically, inasmuch as a host of modern Christians would clearly repudiate Schleiermacher's leadership. The honorific "father of modern theology" expressed by several authors suggests a claim too inclusive to be warranted and too ambiguous to be adequately descriptive. Even the titles "father of modern Protestantism" and "the founder of modern Protestant theology" require the further

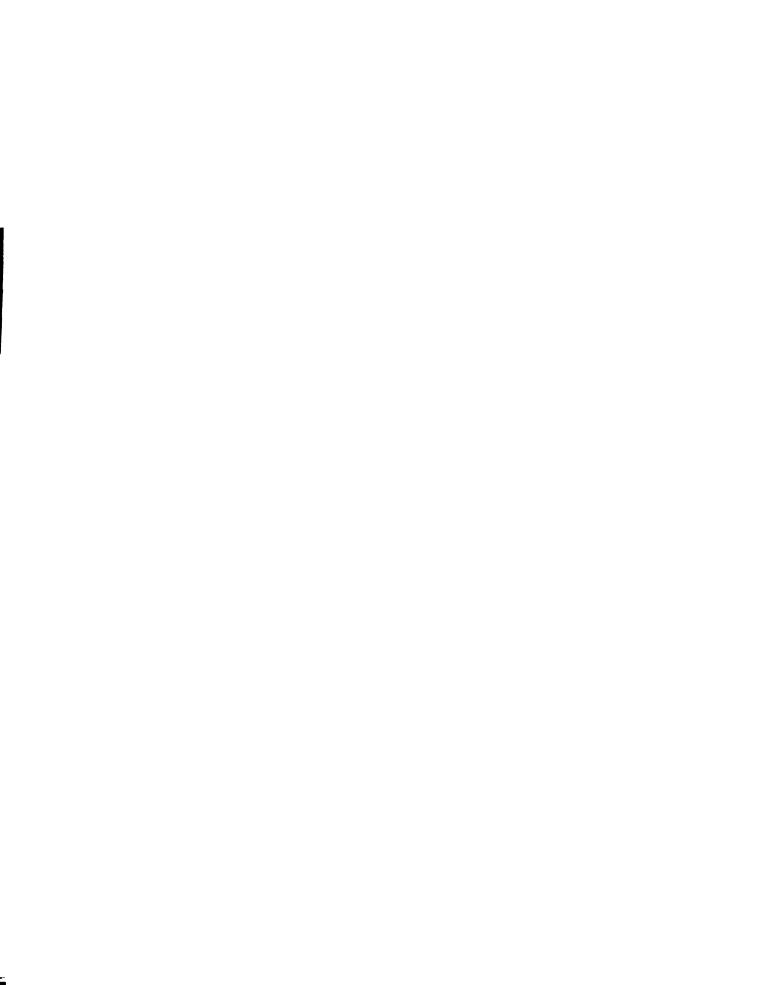
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, "Nachwort," in Heinz Bolli, ed., <u>Schleiermacher-Auswahl</u> (Munich: Siebenstern Taschenbuch <u>Verlag, 1968)</u>, p. 290.

John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 189; William Boothby Selbie, "Schleiermacher," Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1920, XI, 236.

Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964), p. 7.

Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, ed. by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 11, 91.



qualifications "father of liberal Protestantism" and "the father of modern liberal theology." Schleiermacher's unique formulation of theology elicited an eager response among a group of modern thinkers who were under the conviction that a viable theology must originate with the human situation rather than with a supernatural authority.

Schleiermacher's most greatly admired achievement is his systematic theology, which was first issued at Berlin in 1821 under the title The Christian Faith. This carefully organized and superbly executed reconstruction of Christian dogma evoked high praise. In his 1926 Muenster lecture on the history of modern theology, for example, Barth related Schleiermacher to the entire tradition of Christian theology.

I should call attention to the unique character of Schleiermacher's Systematics. . . Schleiermacher had accomplished what was not achieved before him even by an Augustine or a Thomas Aquinas, a Melanchthon, a Zwingli or a Calvin in their corresponding works with their articulated Chapters, Articles or Loci. He has presented a single, astonishingly coherent view of the separate parts (disjecta membra) of the historical Christian faith.4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kenneth Hamilton, "Schleiermacher and Relational Theology," <u>Journal of Religion</u>, XLIV (January, 1964), 29.

Dillenberger and Welch, Protestant Christianity, p. 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, <u>The Christian Faith</u>, English translation of the Second German Edition edited by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928).

<sup>4</sup>Karl Barth, Theology and Church, Shorter Writings

The effect of <u>The Christian Faith</u> on several generations of scholars has especially evoked among them an inevitable comparison of Schleiermacher with John Calvin (1509-1564). "Next to the <u>Institutes</u> of Calvin," in the words of one scholar, "it is the most influential dogmatic work to which evangelical Protestantism can point." 2

In the opinion of competent thinkers the Christian Faith of Schleiermacher is, with the exception of Calvin's Institutes, the most important work covering the whole field of doctrine to which Protestant theology can point. To say this is not necessarily to adopt either his fundamental principles or the detailed conclusions to which these principles have guided him.<sup>3</sup>

This comparison is illuminating in several respects. For one thing, a natural similarity between their dogmatics is manifest since both works exhibit an architectonic structure by means of which each work is systematically organized.

<sup>1920-1928,</sup> trans. by Louise Pettibone Smith, with an Introduction by T. F. Torrance (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 181.

Martin Redeker, "Einleitung des Herausgebers, III. Die Wuerdigung und Kritik der Glaubenslehre im Neuprotestantismus," in Schleiermacher, Der christliche Glaube, nach den Grundsaetzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt (7th ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1960), I, xxxiii-xxxiv.

Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, Schleiermacher to Barth (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 60; cf. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, p. 6; Niebuhr, "Introduction to the Torchbook Edition," Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith (New York: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1963), I, xix-xx.

Mackintosh and Stewart, "Editors' Preface" to Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith (T & T Clark), p. v.

For another, each utilized the classical Christian tradition in a creative way which makes it distinctive. Finally, as Calvin stood at a crucial turning point in the sixteenth century Reformation, so Schleiermacher inaugurated a radical reformulation of theology in the nineteenth century which decisively affected the future of modern thought.

During the years immediately preceding World War I the production of new Schleiermacher studies was extensive. This revival of interest in Schleiermacher occurred at the time when theological liberalism, with its optimistic faith in the seemingly unlimited possibilities of man's nature, predominated. This liberalism coincided with renewed respect for Schleiermacher and interest in his analysis of the relations between religion and culture. When the ashes had settled after World War I a more sober estimate of man appeared more frequently than before, especially in Europe. In less than a generation the dominant voice of Christian liberal theology was muted by a new force, that of crisis theology or Neo-orthodoxy.

In general, Schleiermacher's reputation among theologians and churchmen had been protected by an attitude of reverence and admiration at best, or ignorance at worst. This situation was abruptly altered when spokesmen for Neo-orthodoxy became self-consciously aware of the irreconcilability of their presuppositions with those of Schleiermacher. Thus, in our day, Schleiermacher has appeared at

the center of new controversies as a formidable foe who must be directly faced.

One of the leading proponents of early Neo-orthodoxy was Heinrich Emil Brunner, whose book Die Mystik und das Wort assigned the blame for the anemia and apostasy he saw in twentieth-century Christianity to Schleiermacher's concept of religion. For Brunner, Schleiermacher was the father of both Neo-Protestantism and "mediating theology" (Vermittlungstheologie), which meant the abrogation of the essential foundations of the Reformed tradition in favor of Christianity compromised by the relativities of a comtemporary culture. Brunner further alleged that there are certain fatal deficiencies inherent in "Schleiermacher's deterministic speculative theology--certainly with pantheistic modifications." One recent Schleiermacher study concisely evaluates the deficiencies inherent in Brunner's position in these words:

For Brunner, Schleiermacher represented all that was bad in the modern situation. . . . He intentionally

Heinrich Emil Brunner, <u>Die Mystik und das Wort:</u>

<u>Der Gegensatz zwischen moderner Religionsauffassung und Christlichen Glauben dargestellt an der Theologie Schleiermachers (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924).</u>

Heinrich Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative, A Study in Christian Ethics, trans. by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), pp. 102, 594.

Heinrich Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, Vol. I: The Christian Doctrine of God, trans. by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 346; cf. p. 167.

left all biographical, historical questions aside in order to draw out the one single, devastating impression. . . Brunner was attacking an historical phantom, one which seemed in some respects real enough when embodied in various of his contemporaries but which had little to do with the Schleiermacher which actually existed. I

Few have done more to stimulate the study of Schleiermacher's thought than Karl Barth. Barth represents a curious mixture of praise and condemnation aimed at Schleiermacher.

From early days, Barth has always seen his theological task to be that of countering Schleiermacher's massive influence. The respect—and even affection—which the father of liberal Protestantism inspires in him has never made him doubt that a complete reversal of liberalism was the prime need of twentieth—century theology when he first intervened on the theological scene.<sup>2</sup>

Barth, as well as Brunner, frequently identified Schleier-macher with Neo-Protestantism, which he envisioned as a deviation from true Evangelical Christianity. In characteristic Neo-orthodox fashion, he asserted that "Neo-Protestantism means 'religionism.'" Contrary to what one might anticipate on the basis of his critical attitude, Barth believed he must take account of Schleiermacher in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Terrence Nelson Tice, "Schleiermacher's Theological Method: With Special Attention to His Production of Church Dogmatics" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1961), pp. 23, 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Hamilton, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. I: The Doctrine of the Word of God, Pt. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 291.

his own constructive development. Repeatedly he returned to Schleiermacher in his personal study, in his university teaching, and in his writing. In preparing his monumental Church Dogmatics, Barth felt compelled to come to terms with Schleiermacher's Christian Faith. Commenting on his early German experience, he remarked, "We believed that what we found in the teaching of Schleiermacher was the theological kernel of a Christianity-of-the-present compatible neither with the Bible nor the real world. We were convinced that we must oppose this."

Barth charged that Schleiermacher represented a theology established on the basis of human consciousness, and, as such, is helplessly relative. Judged from Barth's conviction that theology must begin with the objective revelation of the sovereign and transcendent God, Schleiermacher's heuristic principle amounts to a reduction of theology to anthropology. Barth wrote, "There is no doubt that Schleiermacher, whether we look backwards or forwards in the history of theology, was the prince of all anthropocentric, and so of all liberal, theologians." Liberal theology is criticized by Barth for its preoccupation with contemporary thought forms. Barth believed that

<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. II: The Doctrine of God, Pt. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 634.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, "Liberal Theology: Some Alternatives," The Hibbert Journal, LIX (April, 1961), 216-17.

Schleiermacher's excessive concern for securing the acceptance of religion among modern men of the world through apologetics ultimately transformed the content of the theological message, 1 and he warned that "There can be no thought of a general sanctifying of cultural achievement, such as Schleiermacher accomplished with his idealism."2 In spite of his gratitude for Schleiermacher's work, Barth pointed to Schleiermacher's conclusions as confirming evidence of the inherent danger derived from an unacceptable basis. "His result challenged the decisive premise of all Christian theology in a way which had not been known, perhaps since the days of the ancient Gnostics." While Barth was willing to grant Schleiermacher's sincerity, the results produced by the "greatest theological saint" 4 of the liberals suffered a devastating evaluation and condemnation. "In his Christology he intended really to preach Christ, however many considerations go to show he failed to do so." 5 The post-World War I theological era was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 345.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Barth, Theology and Church, p. 344.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 354.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Barth, "Liberal Theology," p. 217.

 $<sup>$^5$</sup>Barth, $\frac{Theology}{2}$ and $\frac{Church}{2}$, p. 192; cf. pp. 208, 288. }$ 

graphically portrayed by Barth as a situation near ship-wreck, when "the moment was at hand to turn the rudder an angle of exactly 180 degrees." The appropriate strategy "might be to stand Schleiermacher on his head."

Barth's analysis of intellectual history assumed that Schleiermacher is the prototype of nineteenth century liberalism or "the great ripe classic of Modernism." Typical references allude to "the developed Neo-Protestantism of Schleiermacher and his school" or "the interpretation of the Reformation on the line taken by Schleiermacher—Ritschl--Troeltsch." The use of such broad uncritical generalizations is vividly illustrated in Barth's characterization of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) as a logical descendent of Schleiermacher's anthropocentric theology. In a recent autobiographical essay Barth disclaimed being

<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, The Humanity of God (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. I: The Doctrine of the Word of God, Pt. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936), p. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, 529.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Barth, Theology and Church, p. 314.

<sup>6</sup>Karl Barth, "An Introductory Essay" to the Harper Torchbook edition of Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. xx-xxviii. Cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/2, 290.

in the Schleiermacher line against such an intimation by Rudolf Karl Bultmann. On the contrary, Barth placed Bultmann directly in the Schleiermacher tradition along with the others previously mentioned. 2

Surveys of the history of modern Protestant thought usually mention Schleiermacher. A perusal of the indices of contemporary theological books reveals numerous references to him. Nearly every theological student has heard the name Schleiermacher, but few have read first-hand what he said. The frequent passing references commonly encountered tend to include an implicit value judgment with a comment on some aspect of his thought or influence.

Schleiermacher has been made responsible for every good thing which has taken place in the interpretation of religion in the West in the last one hundred and fifty years; he has also been blamed for every wrongturning and every dead end pursued in that period.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the limitation of the popular conception many receive of Schleiermacher from secondary sources is compounded by the bias of the contemporary authors' own presuppositions and polemical interests.

Barth, "Nachwort" in Bolli, Schleiermacher-Auswahl, pp. 298-302.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, How I Changed My Mind, ed. by John D. Godsey (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 68. Cf. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>E. Graham Waring, "Introduction" in Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion, Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, trans. by John Oman (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1955), p. v.

Schleiermacher's theology really does not easily fit into the stereotype of liberalism with which commentators have been accustomed to dismiss the nineteenth century, so that the epithets aimed at the latter fail to cripple the power of his true thought. 1

American theology, to a large extent, has been influenced by the hegemony of European scholarship. For a number of years this general esteem for European leadership meant sympathetic attention to Neo-orthodox writers. It was the encouragement of Karl Barth which did much to stimulate American interest in Schleiermacher's contribution to modern theology. This had the effect of making Schleiermacher's significance more widely known and appreciated.

# Historical Context

The chief deficiency in understanding Schleiermacher at the present time is the very limited attention
devoted to the original intellectual context of Schleiermacher's development. "Even the most appreciative studies
of his thought have often been seriously damaged by the
author's assumption of his own theological programme into
Schleiermacher's." Too often Schleiermacher is read from
the perspective of certain twentieth-century schools of
thought, and the result is a distortion of the real

Niebuhr, "Introduction to the Torchbook Edition," Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, I, x.

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$ Tice, dissertation, "Schleiermacher's Theological Method," p. 3.

significance of his formulations. His sensitive perception of the cultural milieu further sets him apart even from others of his generation who are well known. A century ago Dilthey observed,

Kant's philosophy can be understood completely without a more detailed consideration of his person and life. Schleiermacher's significance requires a biographical description for a well-founded understanding of his world-view and his publications. 1

John Dillenberger, in his study of the interaction between Christianity and the growth of the sciences, points out the failure to notice the total cultural context of a controversy inevitably results in misunderstanding of the real issues at stake.

Schleiermacher stands to the Christian tradition as Kant does to the philosophical. He recast and transformed the currents of the immediate past in a synthesis which marked a genuine new departure in Christian history. . . . He knew that the traditional theological systems were no longer viable. . . . Schleiermacher has been judged too much by the inadequacies of his own positive theological statements, and not sufficiently in terms of the problem of his own time.<sup>2</sup>

So long as general knowledge of Schleiermacher is gained by hearing the final conclusions of partisan theologians in another age with their own special problems and interests, Schleiermacher will remain another name representing a

Wilhelm Dilthey, <u>Leben Schleiermachers I</u> (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1870), p. i; cf. Mackintosh, <u>Types of Modern Theology</u>, pp. 5, 31-32.

John Dillenberger, Protestant Thought and Natural Science (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), p. 193. Cf. Niebuhr, "Introduction to the Torchbook Edition," Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, I, ix.

dead-end search that the modern student can wisely avoid investigating. A satisfactory introduction to Schleier-macher's world of ideas properly includes an analysis of that original context. While Richard B. Brandt emphasizes the dependence of Schleiermacher's theology on philosophy, he likewise recognizes the vital role of the historical situation in the genesis of imaginative new solutions.

His views on religion are as a whole not intelligible by themselves, and he has, I think, often been misunderstood because his statements about religion were read outside their general context. . . This motivating force of his thinking depended on his nature and experiences and not on sheer analytical acuteness. Thus, although knowing the causes of a man's accepting certain theories is not essential to an understanding of the logical structure of his system, it may benand it is the case in this instance—that his system becomes more intelligible in the broad sense in the light of some insight into his character and experience.1

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) is best recognized for his philosophical approach and his insistence on the correlation of theology with the existential relevance of culture. In addition, he possessed an uncanny ability to view historical developments of intellectual history in perspective. In spite of the fact that Tillich wrote little directly about Schleiermacher in comparison to Barth, Tillich's appraisal of Schleiermacher's significance was astute.

Richard B. Brandt, The Philosophy of Schleier-macher, The Development of His Theory of Scientific and Religious Knowledge (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), pp. 3, 5; cf. p. 42.

No present-day theology should avoid a discussion of Schleiermacher's experiential method, whether in agreement or disagreement. One of the causes for the disquieting effect of neo-orthodox theology was that it detached itself completely from Schleiermacher's method, consequently denying the theological development of the last two hundred years (one hundred years before and one hundred years after Schleiermacher.) l

Past and present restoration movements try to recapture what was once alive in the period of Orthodoxy. . . . This means that you cannot even understand people like Schleiermacher or Ritschl, American liberalism or the Social Gospel theology, because you do not know that against which they were directed or on what they were dependent.<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion evolved as a result of his intimate acquaintance with divergent philosophical and theological currents in late eighteenth century Germany. Attention to the historical and intellectual context of Schleiermacher's work is indispensable to an adequate understanding of his thought. Consideration of that context is especially relevant due to the decisive effect that those circumstances had on his conceptual development and to the tendency of certain contemporary writers, such as Barth and Brunner, to judge Schleiermacher primarily in the light of twentieth century issues.

Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Paul Tillich, <u>A History of Christian Thought</u>, ed. by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 277. Cf. Tillich, Perspectives, p. 91.

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## CHAPTER II

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The story of Schleiermacher's life reveals a most unusual combination of external circumstances. The events of his life, together with his acute awareness and fertile insight, placed him in a position to become keenly conscious of fermenting intellectual forces leading from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century in northern Europe. Familiarity with Schleiermacher's biography vividly illumines the development of his creative thought.

## Childhood and Youth 1768-1787

Schleiermacher's father, Gottlieb Adolph Schleyermacher (May 5, 1727-September 2, 1794), was a chaplain of
the Reformed Church to a regiment of the Prussian army
stationed in Silesia. He served as a teacher at the
Magdeburg orphanage 1758-60, and thereafter as a military
chaplain beginning in 1760. Gottlieb was the eldest son
of Daniel Schleyermacher (b. 1695), a clergyman of a radical
and emotional faith. He had been associated with the
Ronsdorf sect of Elias Eller, which was well-known in the

Rhineland for its apocalyptic, messianic message. After eight years as preacher of Eller's church, Daniel left the sect in 1749, but suspicion and persecution of the radicals at that time forced him to flee for his life from Elberfeld to Arnheim, Holland with his family in 1751. As a result of this experience, Gottlieb carefully avoided the excessive claims of supernatural religion that disregarded reason. His attitude in religious matters was influenced by the rationalism of the day. He later confessed to his son a skepticism wherein he preached for twelve years without the firm religious convictions a clergyman would ordinarily be assumed to possess. The practical value of morality and religious beliefs formed the basis of Gottlieb's religious commitment.

At the conclusion of the Seven Years' War Gottlieb Schleiermacher resided in Breslau, 2 a city of around 50,000. In 1764 at the age of thirty-seven he took twenty-eight-year-old Katharina Maria Stubenrauch (July 27, 1737-November 17, 1783) as his wife. Both her father and grandfather had been court preachers at the cathedral church in Berlin. The Sack, Spalding and Stubenrauch families formed the inner circle of aristocratic clergy of

The Life of Schleiermacher as Unfolded in His Autobiography and Letters, trans. by Frederica Rowan (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1860), I, 84-85; cf. p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Breslau is currently known as Wroclaw, Poland.

the Reformed Church in Berlin. Friedrich Schleiermacher later came to know Friedrich Samuel Gottfried Sack (1738-1817), son of August Friedrich Wilhelm Sack (1703-1786), both as a helpful friend and hostile critic.

A daughter, Charlotte, was born to the Schleiermachers in Breslau on March 31, 1765. Friedrich Daniel

Ernst was born on November 21, 1768, and a second son,

Karl, was born a year later. A younger daughter, Vieckchen,

died as a small child, apparently of small-pox. Katharina

Schleiermacher was a mother with great sensitivity and

concern regarding the personal development of her children's

lives. Conscientiously she cared for all their needs in the

face of the frequent and prolonged absences of her husband

occasioned by his duties as army chaplain. She directed

the children at home in their early learning such as reading

and writing.

At the age of five Friedrich was afforded the opportunity to attend Friedrich's School in Breslau. He was a precocious child whose accomplishments quickly surpassed a number of older students. For example, at an early age he easily mastered Latin grammar. The family moved to Pless in Upper Silesia in 1778 at the time of the War of Bavarian Succession, when Chaplain Schleiermacher took up his station with the troops in anticipation of battle action.

Pless is situated in what is now south-central Poland near the Czech border, and is currently named Pszczyna.

A year later, when Friedrich was eleven, his father returned and the family made their residence at the colony of Anhalt in Upper Silesia, which was composed primarily of Moravians. In his autobiography Friedrich summarized this period of his life.

From my tenth to my twelfth year I was mostly in the country. . . . From my twelfth to my fourteenth year, during which period I was at a boarding-school in Pless, I fell into the hands of a pupil of Ernesti. . . . His enthusiasm for the classical languages, together with my ambitious desire to surpass others, stimulated the activity of my mind. 2

During the spring of 1778, while the Prussian troops were quartered in Gnadenfrei<sup>3</sup> in Upper Silesia, Chaplain Gottlieb Schleiermacher became acquainted with Moravian pietism. Sermons by Brother Heinrich von Bruiningk caused a decided change in the emphasis of the fifty-five-year-old chaplain's religious convictions. This marked the beginning of his warm respect and interest in the Moravian faith. His enthusiastic comments to his wife about the Moravians led to an extended trip in the fall of 1782, when they visited the Moravian communities at Gnadenfrei, Herrnhut and Niesky. Their concern for the welfare of their children coupled with the favorable impression of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Johann August Ernesti was a prominent Leipzig philologist.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>This Prussian village was located in territory which is now part of Poland.

Moravian communities culminated in a journey by the whole family to Gnadenfrei.

Accompanied by their three children, the parents arrived at Gnadenfrei on April 5, 1783. They remained about eleven weeks, during which time they continued to observe the community and made the necessary arrangements to have their children accepted for enrollment. The children of non-members of the Moravian community were accepted with reluctance and caution. "At the recommendation of the local officials the Unity Elders' Conference held its formal discussion and drew the Lot with relation to the admission of the Schleiermacher boys on May 17, 1783, and the result was affirmative." Charlotte, then eighteen, remained at Gnadenfrei for many years, while her brothers, Friedrich and Karl, were taken to Niesky in Upper Lusatia, a town of about 600 population originally founded in 1742 by the Moravian brethren, located in the fertile plains north of Goerlitz. Friedrich entered the Paedogogium at Niesky on June 14, 1783, where he lived and studied until September 17, 1785.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>James David Nelson, "Herrnhut: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Homeland" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1963), p. 490; cf. Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>In modern terms this would be situated in East Germany near the Polish border slightly north of Czechoslovakia.

Friedrich's father reported his impressions of his journey taken in the fall of 1782 to his brother-in-law.

We journeyed on to Niesky, where we found the educational establishment in every respect excellent beyond expectation. The village is small but pleasant, and the air very pure. The educational establishment consists of the paedagogio and a child's school; in the former, there are about forty young people, and in the latter more than sixty children. I visited as many of the classes as possible, and in all I found the instruction thorough-going. The supervision exercised in this institution, as also the economical arrangements, seem to me as perfect as any I have ever known.

His mother, as well as his father, had expressed concern about the potentially harmful and corrupting effect of the secular environment of that age upon impressionable youth. The carefully regulated atmosphere of the Moravian schools appeared ideal in their estimation. In a letter to his sister Charlotte the fifteen-year-old Schleiermacher reminisced:

I often think of what she [mother] said in Gradenfrei: "Now that all the children are going to the Brethren, I shall be of little more use here, so I may as well lay me down and go to sleep." And when I took leave of her here, I felt as if I should never see her again.<sup>3</sup>

His mother returned home with trusting confidence for her children's future. Her subsequent letters reveal a deep peace and joy. 4 Five months after Friedrich and Karl

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 23-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid</u>., pp. 5, 25. <sup>3</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-28.

entered the Paedagogium, a school official told them word had been received that their mother had died.

Schleiermacher's father remarried in 1785. His second wife was a member of the Moravian congregation at Pless. Three children were born to them within six years: Anna Maria Louise (Nanny), Sophie Caroline, and Charlotte Friederike Wilhelmine. After their father died in 1794 Friedrich showed an interest in the welfare of his half-sisters.

Schleiermacher had fond memories of his days at Niesky. 1 The experiential piety of the Moravian faith deeply impressed him and influenced his concept of religion throughout his life. He studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew, in addition to German literature. One of his teachers, Anton Benjamin Hilmer, encouraged his earlier interest in classical studies. No examinations were required of the students. The school allowed a generous amount of free time for independent study, which Schleiermacher used profitably. His closest friend during his student years with the Moravians was Jean Baptist Albertini (1769-1831), later a Moravian bishop and poet. Togther they pursued advanced studies in addition to the regular curriculum. Both were highly gifted students who were promoted together to the Seminary at Barby an der Elbe<sup>2</sup> at the age of sixteen

<sup>1 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Barby was the site of a Moravian Brethren colony in East Germany, 1749-1809.

after only two years at Niesky instead of the usual course of six years.

Friedrich Schleiermacher arrived at the Seminary on September 22, 1785. Barby, which was located about thirty-seven miles north of Halle on the Elbe River, served as the advanced training center for future clergy and teachers for the Moravian communities. A select group of the most promising students studied at Barby.

In examination of the curriculum it will be observed that the inclination to gain a passable knowledge in many fields which was noted in the <u>Paedagogium</u> was carried still farther in the Seminary. In its ideal of a general education it was in many ways more like a liberal arts college than a German university or an American theological seminary. This school avoided the narrowness brought by professional specialization in both of these latter institutions, and by the constant tailoring of the curriculum to the particular needs of its relatively small number of students this school was able to turn out a very high quality of cultured men. I

Schleiermacher's searching mind continually pressed beyond the narrow limits of school studies. In private studies he and Albertini were joined in their personal quest by Samuel Okely, a student from England. The Seminary permitted only the reading of books whose usefulness was well established in relation to its goals. An informal "philosophy club" composed of Schleiermacher, Albertini and Okely together with Johann Jacob Beyer and Emanuel Zaeslein sought a wider field of investigation than the Seminary allowed. They conspired "through means of forbidden

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Nelson, dissertation, "Herrnhut," p. 529.

correspondence and by secret and circuitous routes" to obtain books being discussed in Germany at the time. In addition to Kant's new works, they eagerly read Goethe's Werther and Wieland's poems, and the critical discussions found in the Jenaer Literaturzeitung. Each member of the club proudly considered himself a free thinker (Selbstdenker).

The Moravian system showed a shrewd appreciation of wordly commonsense, but the uncommon achievements of worldly-minded genius, like natural science and classical literature, it generally neglected. Its deepest vein was other-worldly, and it found greater value in spontaneous inner lights, in dreams and unexpected revelations of the supernatural, than in learning. . . . No attention was paid to the renaissance in letters, in scholarship, and in philosophy that was even then raising the German mind to its highest spiritual achievements. There was an index of forbidden literature, both ancient and modern.<sup>2</sup>

Before long Schleiermacher's complaints about the narrowness of Moravian religion and education led to a confirmation of his teachers' fears that exposure to worldly
thought would lead to skepticism and heterodoxy. Schleiermacher realized what was happening.

My convictions soon differed so widely from the system adopted by the United Brethren, that I thought I could no longer conscientiously remain a member of the congregation, and the utterances of my ideas also became so distinct, that the attention of the superiors was

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 11.

Horace Leland Friess, "Introduction" to Friedrich Schleiermacher, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, an English Translation of The Monologen (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1926), pp. xvi-xvii.

attracted to the trefoil (for a young Englishman of remarkable talent had by this time joined my friend and myself). In vain was every means of conversion employed. . . . 1

The Seminary administration would not tolerate doubts and criticism akin to the Enlightenment since they feared these might spread like a disease among the students.

His theological teachers in Barby had little understanding for the circle of a few open doubters; all doubt was considered the manifestation of a sinful will. That led to a tightening of educational precautions. In 1786 the philosophical studies were specifically forbidden to that circle of friends. His English friend Okely was expelled from the congregation.<sup>2</sup>

This course of events made it clear to Schleiermacher that he must restrain his doubts or be subject to
dismissal. A dissenter would certainly not be granted a
position as teacher or clergyman among the Moravians. Even
if he did obtain such an office someday, he would be forced
to deny his ambition to pursue critical scholarship. Thus
it became painfully obvious that unless he intended to conform and seriously prepare for Moravian leadership, he
should seek an honorable way to depart from Barby. After
an extended period of self-examination he mustered the
courage to confide in his father. This was done in a letter
on January 21, 1787. The resolute but frightened youth
hesitantly revealed the change that had occurred in his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 12.

Martin Redeker, <u>Friedrich Schleiermacher</u>, <u>Leben</u>
und Werk (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), pp. 22-23.

heart. At that time he felt the necessity of resolving this personal struggle which he thought might eventually lead to his return to the Moravians, although Schleier-macher was no longer able to grant his unqualified assent to the rigidly orthodox supernaturalistic Christology so essential to the Moravian faith.

Several of Schleiermacher's friends from Barby were studying at Halle, and his mother's brother was a professor there. He pleaded with his father for permission to transfer to the University of Halle. Unfortunately, this father who had himself experienced years of theological uncertainty before his transformation among the Moravians less than ten years earlier became incensed at the son's request. A series of letters between father and son ensued, marked by disappointment, bitterness and misunderstandings. The confused Friedrich was wounded by the unjustified accusations of delusion, pride and wickedness vehemently advanced by his father in emotion-laden rhetoric. His father emphatically declared his position.

I shall not as yet write to Halle, because I hope that the blessing of the Lord may attend my words and my prayers.

Should you write to your uncle--to do which I give you my permission in case your thoughts are not changed --then regard yourself as having taken leave of me and of the congregation; but longer than a year and a half, reckoning from Easter next, I cannot let you study;

Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 48-49.

in that time you must make yourself efficient for some tutorship or other.  $^{\scriptsize 1}$ 

# Young Scholar and Teacher 1787-1794

At Easter in 1787 Schleiermacher matriculated at the University of Halle. His uncle, Samuel Ernst Timotheus Stubenrauch, Professor of Theology at the university, provided Schleiermacher with a room in his own home. This arrangement was economical for the student, and made wise and sympathetic counsel readily available. Schleiermacher never regretted the decision to come to Halle. Commenting in retrospect, he spoke of that break: "While enjoying the beautiful freedom of youth I succeeded in the crucial act of casting off the mummery in which long and tedious hours of educational sacrilege had clothed me."<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher had developed the habit of intensive personal study with little dependence on the usual regimentation of an academic program. Moreover, his inner struggle to resolve certain intellectual issues of urgent concern to him made it likely that Schleiermacher would resist a conventional course of study. He was a diligent student, but he attended only a few courses with regularity. Schleiermacher's previous interest in ancient Greek philosophy was further developed under the guidance of the Halle philologist and classicist, Friedrich August Wolf (1759-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, p. 74.

1824). The best known Halle philosopher at that time was Johann August Eberhard (1738-1809). Although Eberhard had begun his career as a theologian, he became professor of philosophy at Halle in 1778. In his teaching Eberhard stressed the continuity between modern philosophy and the ancient Greeks. Responding to Eberhard's suggestion, Schleiermacher embarked upon a translation of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics with annotations.

A revival of classical studies made its appearance in the eighteenth century, which brought Schleiermacher and many of his contemporaries under its spell. In the same years that he was translating Aristotle at Halle, Friedrich Schlegel was studying Greek poetry at Leipzig and Dresden, Schelling Greek mythology at Tuebingen, and Hegel Greek religion at Tuebingen and Basel. 1

The philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) occupied the attention of Schleiermacher during his student years at Halle. Before coming to Halle he had read Kant's Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics. His teacher Eberhard was an articulate critic of Kant. Schleiermacher read Kantian writings on his own initiative without assistance. Some of his early essays included evaluations of Kant's ideas.

When his Uncle Stubenrauch left Halle and assumed an appointment as pastor at Drossen<sup>3</sup> on May 26, 1789,

lariess, "Introduction" to Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, p. xxi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The Brandenburg city of Drossen was located

Schleiermacher accompanied him. He spent the ensuing year preparing for the theological examinations required of all candidates for the Reformed ministry. In the spring he traveled to Berlin and passed his first theological examinations in May, 1790.

In October, 1790 at the age of twenty-two Schleier-macher accepted a position in a new environment, wherein he became responsible for his own livelihood for the first time. Through the kindness of court preacher F. S. G. Sack he had been recommended as a tutor to a certain Count Dohna who had twelve children. Count Dohna was an enlightened Junker with an estate at Schlobitten in distant eastern Prussia. Schleiermacher's experiences at the home of this noble family developed his social graces and conversational ability. The charms of Friederike, a seventeen-year-old daughter, revealed to him the nature of the feminine personality after years of contact with only boys and men. With pleasure he recalled how "In a stranger's home my sense for the beauty of human fellowship was first awakened."

sixteen miles ENE of Frankfurt an der Oder, and today is known as Osno, Poland.

<sup>1</sup>Schlobitten is located in northern Poland near the present border with the U.S.S.R., and is now called Slobity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, p. 74.

The two eldest sons of Count Dohna, Alexander and Wilhelm, with whom he became acquainted, were near him in age and remained his friends later in Berlin. Eventually the conservative social and political opinions of Count Dohna led to a disagreement with Schleiermacher over his performance as a tutor. Schleiermacher left Schlobitten in May of 1793 on good terms with Count Dohna but with the conviction that the time was ripe for a change. In a letter he wrote,

Each period of my life up to the present time has seemed to me like a school, and looking at it from this point of view I cannot help thinking that it was time my stay at Schlobitten should cease, for all that I could learn there I had already learnt.

Schleiermacher continued to pursue his studies in his own disciplined fashion wherever he was. After spending time in Drossen on his way, he came in due time to Berlin. In the fall of 1793 he was invited to become a member of the seminar for college teachers which was conducted by Dr. Friedrich Gedike. At the same time he worked as part-time teacher at the Kornmesser Orphanage, where he was given free lodging. He successfully passed his second theological examination on March 31, 1794 in Berlin and was ordained a clergyman of the Reformed Church.

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 120.

# Cleric of the Reformed Church 1794-1804

Schleiermacher's first ecclesiastical appointment was as assistant to Pastor Schumann, brother-in-law of his Uncle Stubenrauch. The failing health of Schumann necessitated an assistant to assume most of the parish duties. This Reformed Church parish was at Landsberg an der Warthe in Brandenburg, a few miles from Drossen. During the two years at Landsberg, commencing in April 1794, Schleiermacher's research resulted in his first published works. He collaborated with F. S. G. Sack in translating sermons of Edinburgh scholar Hugh Blair. The three volumes of Blair's sermons appeared in 1794, 1795 and 1802, along with a similar volume of translated sermons of the English Baptist preacher John Fawcett in 1797.

During the Landsberg period Schleiermacher continued his analysis of the writings of Kant, whom he had visited personally at Koenigsberg<sup>2</sup> in 1791. Kant's book, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, which attracted wide notice when it appeared in 1793, was scrutinized by Schleiermacher in his attempt to define the function of religion. The philosophy of Spinoza also occupied his critical attention while he resided at Landsberg. He attempted to reconcile the divergent philosophies of Kant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Gorzow Wielkopolski, Poland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Koenigsberg is a Baltic seaport 320 miles northeast of Berlin and today is known as Kaliningrad, U.S.S.R.

and Spinoza. These thinkers were the subjects of his early philosophical essays.

A new position as the chaplain of the large <u>Charité</u>
Hospital again brought Schleiermacher to the cosmopolitan
environment of Berlin in the fall of 1796.

Here in Berlin from 1796-1802 he finally came into immediate personal contact with the larger intellectual currents of the time, meeting men whose minds were working along lines similar to those in which his own thought was half-articulately moving. 1

Upon renewing the acquaintance of Alexander Dohna, the oldest son of the Count of Schlobitten who eventually became Minister of State in Prussia, Schleiermacher was introduced to a remarkable circle of friends. This elite group was centered around the home of a prominent Jewish physician, Dr. Marcus Herz, and his young wife, Henriette. Prominent in this literary fellowship gathered about Henriette Herz were Jewish women such as Dorothea Veit, daughter of the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn.

The Swedish diplomat Gustav von Brinkmann (1764-1847), an old friend of Schleiermacher's from student days at Barby and Halle, was instrumental in initiating Schleiermacher's friendship with Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829). Schleiermacher wrote, "I first learnt to know him in a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Friess, "Introduction" in Schleiermacher, <u>Solilo-quies</u>, p. xxv.

Rudolf Haym, Die Romantische Schule: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschen Geistes (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1870), pp. 243, 395.

society of which I am a member, and which meets for literary purposes, such as the reading of essays, communication of literary news, discussion of important literary works."

This informal group was known as The Wednesday Society. Its participants included several individuals prominent in government and the artistic and literary worlds. A substantial part of Schleiermacher's time was spent with the leaders of the German Romantic movement in Berlin. Beginning in December 1797, Friedrich Schlegel roomed with Schleiermacher for nearly two years. Schleiermacher during this time contributed essays to the <a href="Athenaeum">Athenaeum</a>, the journal of the Berlin Romantics. At Schlegel's suggestion the two men began a German translation of Plato's works.

Impressed with Schleiermacher's ability to express ideas in conversation, the Romantics chided him for his failure to put his inner thoughts into print. Finally, while serving as interim court preacher at Potsdam early in 1799, separated from his friends, he expressed himself. In April his first original work appeared under the title On Religion: Addresses to its Cultured Despisers. On

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, <u>Ueber die Religion:</u>
Reden an <u>die Gebildeten unter ihren Veraechtern</u>, ed. by
Rudolf Otto (6th ed.; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,
1967). English translation: <u>On Religion</u>: <u>Speeches to its</u>
Cultured <u>Despisers</u>, trans. by <u>John Oman</u>, intro. by Rudolf
Otto, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Brothers,
1958).

Religion elucidates explicitly Schleiermacher's concept of religion and is undoubtedly his most widely read book. One year later he published the Monologen, an introspective revelation of his thoughts on the course of his life. Both the above-mentioned books display the influence of the mode of expression he absorbed in the Romantic circle.

One of the themes of Romantic interest was love. They emphasized that love should be a sincere expression of the inwardness of two harmonious souls. The 1799 publication of Schlegel's novel, <u>Lucinde</u>, dramatically portrayed a concept of love and marriage which was offensive to most readers. In an attempt to defend Schlegel, Schleiermacher anonymously published <u>Confidential Letters</u> <u>Concerning Lucinde</u>, nearly equal in length to the <u>Lucinde</u> itself. This controversy was further complicated by Schlegel's affair (and eventual marriage) with Dorothea Veit, wife of Berlin banker Simon Veit. Schleiermacher ruminated on this problem and privately commented,

I often amuse myself in a sad way with speculating upon which persons would have suited each other as man and wife; for how often does it not happen, when one sees

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, <u>Vertraute Briefe ueber</u> <u>Friedrich Schlegels Lucinde</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-<u>Verlag, 1964)</u>.

three or four couples together, that one is struck with what good marriages might ensue if they were allowed to make exchanges. 1

Concerning Lucinde Schleiermacher became acquainted with Eleanore Grunow, the wife of a Berlin clergyman, who had been betrothed at the age of twelve. Her marriage, childless and pitifully unhappy, appeared to Schleiermacher to be devoid of the essential elements of love necessary in marriage. Schleiermacher visited Eleanore regularly in Berlin at this time and sympathized with her plight. He offered to marry her if she obtained a divorce. This plan was seriously considered for several years until her vacillating indecision ended in the fall of 1805 when she withdrew her suit for divorce shortly before it was to be finalized.

Reformed Church officials had been observing the activities of this promising young cleric with deep concern. Court preacher Sack confronted Schleiermacher directly about his undesirable association with Jews 4 and with certain writers, and repeated his disapproval of the

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, II, 68-69; cf. <u>Soliloquies</u>, pp. 78-81.

Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 178-79, 186.

pantheistic tendencies he detected in On Religion. Sack forcefully suggested that Schleiermacher accept an appointment far from Berlin, lest his career be ruined. 1

In May 1802 Schleiermacher reluctantly took up his duties as court preacher at Stolp<sup>2</sup> in Pomerania near the Baltic Sea. During the two years of his exile he performed the necessary pastoral duties for the small Reformed Church and continued his correspondence and writing. The projected translations of Plato, long since forgotten by Schlegel, were continued by Schleiermacher. His analysis and annotations of Plato stand as pioneering work in modern philological and philosophical scholarship. "Schleiermacher himself was deeply interested in the form of the dialogues, believing that an understanding of the form would offer the key to the problems of authenticity and chronology." The six-volume Plato translations became the standard German edition, comparable in usage to the English edition by Jowett.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Stolp is now Slupsk in northwest Poland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Brandt, pp. 9, 16, 200, 300; Dilthey, "Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher," in <u>Gesammelte Schriften</u>, IV. (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1959), 363; Niebuhr, <u>Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion</u>, p. 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Richard R. Niebuhr, "Schleiermacher on Language and Feeling," Theology Today, XVII, 2 (July, 1960), p. 151.

# Professor at Halle and Berlin 1804-1834

While in his remote exile at Stolp Schleiermacher entertained an enticing offer to become professor of ethics and practical theology at Wuerzburg in Bavaria.

The Prussian government, apparently desirous of caring for its intellectuals, had stayed Schleiermacher's reluctant decision to accept a professorship outside Prussia at Wuerzburg in 1804 in place of his rather isolated pastorate in Stolp in Prussian Pomerania with the offer of a chair and pulpit in Halle. 1

On October 12 he arrived in Halle to assume this dual assignment as Professor of Theology extraordinarius and preacher to the University of Halle. His half-sister Nanny joined him as housekeeper and remained with him until her marriage in 1817 to Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860).

Slowly Schleiermacher gained acceptance as a competent lecturer from the Halle faculty and students. Additional volumes of his Plato translations were published during this period. Shortly before his second Christmas at Halle he received an inspiration to write Christmas Eve, Dialogue on the Incarnation. This lively

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Richard C. Raack, "Schleiermacher's Political Thought and Activity, 1806-1813," Church History, XXVIII (1959), 376; cf. Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 373-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Friedrich Schleiermacher saemmtliche Werke, I. Theologie: Band l. Die Weihnachtsfeier: Ein Gespraech (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1843). English translation: Christmas Eve, Dialogue on the Incarnation, trans. by Terrence N. Tice with intro. and notes (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1967). Studies of this work available in English include Barth, Theology and Church, pp. 136-58; Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion,

literary composition centering around a family's Christmas

Eve celebration clearly manifests the influence of Romanti-

In the fall of 1806 the tranquility of Halle was suddenly shattered when French troops occupied the city. In a letter of November 4 Schleiermacher described the siege and the soldiers' pillage of his apartment. These events were related to the humiliating October 14 defeat of the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstadt by Napoleon's forces. Even though the university was dissolved, Schleiermacher continued to preach. Eventually the Halle area was transferred by the French to Westphalian jurisdiction, which required church prayers for the king and queen of Westphalia. Out of loyalty to Prussia, Schleiermacher returned to Berlin in May of 1807 as a private scholar and supply preacher. 2

Schleiermacher was active in patriotic activities from the time of the French invasion until the War of Liberation. In 1808 he made trips to Ruegen and to Koenigsberg on secret missions to contact patriotic conspirators. He eagerly offered his help for the regeneration

pp. 21-71; Terrence N. Tice, "Schleiermacher's Interpretation of Christmas," <u>Journal of Religion</u>, XLVII, 2 (April, 1967), 100-26.

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, II, 64-65, 72-73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

of Prussia, and his advice was sought by high government officials. He became the editor of the <u>Preussischer</u>

Correspondent, the organ of Prussian patriotism during the war in 1813. While Fichte delivered his famous <u>Addresses</u>

to the <u>German Nation</u> to evoke the unity of the nation,

Schleiermacher tirelessly labored for the same purpose from the pulpit. Although the Prussian reform movement under Stein and Dohna received Schleiermacher's enthusiastic support, Dawson's claim that Schleiermacher's life was motivated chiefly by devotion to the nation is exaggerated.

Schleiermacher, with the bases of freedom of association and civil liberty postulated by his political philosophy and with his efforts both to enact his convictions through his church reform proposals and to create a responsible public opinion, remained among the men of the Prussian reform movement the closest approximation of Western European liberalism and democracy. . . . Schleiermacher became the voice of political idealism in Prussia.<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher's pamphlet of 1808, <u>Gelegentliche</u>

<u>Gedanken ueber Universitaeten in deutschem Sinn</u>, which

Jerry F. Dawson, <u>Friedrich</u> <u>Schleiermacher</u>: <u>The</u> <u>Evolution of a Nationalist</u> (Austin: <u>University of Texas</u> <u>Press, 1966)</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Richard C. Raack, "The Course of Political Idealism in Prussia, 1806-1813" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1957), pp. 198, 207.

Schleiermacher, Saemmtliche Werke, III.

Philosophie: Band 1. Gelegentliche Gedanken ueber Universitaeten in deutschem Sinn: Nebst einem Anhang ueber eine neu zu errichtende, pp. 535-644.

contained plans for a new university with the conviction that Berlin should be the intellectual center of Prussia, provided the blueprint for the University of Berlin. An official position under Wilhelm von Humboldt in the Section for Public Instruction effective in July 1809 put Schleiermacher in a position of educational influence in Prussia.

The University of Berlin opened in October 1810, with Schleiermacher as the first dean of theology. He prepared an encyclopaedia of theological disciplines for his students in 1811, which related coherently the practical and theoretical aspects of Christianity as he understood them. Approximately one-fourth of the university students at Berlin were studying theology during the final decade of Schleiermacher's career. At this same time Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was lecturing on philosophy there. Schleiermacher was an active member of the distinguished Berlin Academy of Sciences, an honor never bestowed upon his colleague at the University, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), who was professor of philosophy before Hegel held that position.

One year preceding Schleiermacher's appointment as professor of theology at Berlin two significant events occurred which affected the remainder of his life. They

Schleiermacher, Saemmtliche Werke, I. Theologie: Band 1. Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums. English translation: Brief Outline on the Study of Theology, trans. by Terrence N. Tice (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966).

were his marriage and the beginning of a long pastorate at Trinity Church in Berlin. Since meeting Pastor Ehrenfried von Willich in 1801, 1 Schleiermacher had maintained a warm friendship and correspondence with Ehrenfried and his wife, Henriette von Muehlenfels (1788-1840). Henriette found herself a widow at eighteen with two children to care for when Pastor von Willich died of typhoid early in 1807 while serving the Prussian troops during the siege of Stralsund. 2 Following an extended correspondence, Schleiermacher married Henriette in May 1809 at Ruegen. Their family included three daughters, a son, Nathanael (1820-1829), as well as the two von Willich children and an adopted girl.

One month after his wedding Schleiermacher assumed duties as pastor of the large Trinity Church (<u>Dreifaltig-keitskirche</u>) in Berlin. His eloquent preaching was heard by a large congregation of predominantly well-educated and upper-class persons.

It was precisely in his sermons that Schleiermacher's characteristic desires and achievements were made evident, at any rate in their liveliest and most eloquent form. . . . Those who know what preaching and academic work involve should be truly impressed by the fact that together with all other things that claimed attention, Schleiermacher managed to perform this office year in and year out, almost every Sunday.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, II,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Barth, <u>Protestant Thought</u>, p. 311.

Schleiermacher was above all else a Christian clergyman with deep respect for the Church and its life. He contributed leadership to a host of practical ecclesiastical projects. When he met Stein, the Prussian Minister of State, at Koenigsberg in 1808, Schleiermacher was requested to draft a program of church reform. Zealously he strove for a union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Prussia that would unite the two German confessions and at the same time would free the churches from secular political domination. He was the presiding officer at the Brandenburg Synod when the two churches united as The Evangelical Church in 1817. The full title of Schleiermacher's church dogmatics of 1821 was The Christian Faith, presented systematically according to the fundamental doctrines of the Evangelical Church. Here was a statement of the essentials of the faith for the new Church, expressed in original terms for the nineteenth century.

Friedrich Schleiermacher continued to exercise the office of preacher and professor of theology and philosophy vigorously until a few days before his death on February 12, 1834. The mile-long funeral procession included the king and crown prince, along with many other persons prominent in intellectual and literary as well as political circles.

#### CHAPTER III

# CHARACTERISTIC GERMAN PHILOSOPHIES OF RELIGION

The education and experience of Friedrich Schleiermacher brought him into contact with important cultural currents characteristic of the age of Frederick the Great. He was personally associated with theologians, philosophers and literary figures representative of the Prussian tradition. "Schleiermacher's background thereby combined many of the great intellectual factors dominant in eighteenth century Germany: orthodox Christianity, Pietism, and the Christianized Enlightenment."

### Rationalism in Philosophy and Theology

Since the sixteenth century Reformation, religious problems had been clearly interrelated with political and intellectual questions. The territorial solution to the Reformation adopted by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 officially sanctioned the particularism of the German states

<sup>1</sup>Raack dissertation, "Political Idealism," p. 44.

which continued until the nineteenth century. The rivalries and conflicts between those numerous principalities claiming sovereignty inside the empire frequently had religious dimensions. At the termination of the Thirty Years' War at Westphalia in 1648 Germany found herself with a significantly reduced population and a devastated economy. Still the antipathy between the Christian confessions, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed, continued among the party theologians and their advocates.

## Protestant Scholasticism

In the seventeenth century the prophetic insights of the reformers were systematized with conceptual aids from secular philosophy. Faith became transformed from primarily a personal relationship between man and God to belief in carefully formulated propositions. While Roman Catholicism refined its doctrinal standards and practices at Trent, the Lutheran and Reformed groups convened synods to consolidate their respective positions. This period when the rigid canons of orthodoxy were established by the latter groups is known as Protestant Scholasticism.

Whereas the Reformation had launched Christianity on a new course dissociated from medieval scholasticism, Protestant orthodoxy in seventeenth century Europe evolved into a new scholasticism remarkably similar to that of Roman Catholicism. The priorities of the Protestant scholastics tended to give the impression that faith is

nearly synonymous with intellectual assent to propositional truth. The promulgation of official statements of faith represented a process of defining and consolidating the positions of Protestant confessions. The content of theology was assumed to be timeless truth established from the supernatural revelation of the Bible, the Christian sourcebook of knowledge. The theologians were not satisfied to state the supernatural truth in broad, general terms. They worked diligently to delineate every nuance of truth considered essential to their confession, and usually framed it defensively in contrast to that of other groups. The terminology and argumentation was heavily dependent on Aristotle. Aristotelian philosophy provided the formal conceptual tools for expressing supernatural truth with the characteristic precision the scholastics desired. The supernatural truths of an inerrant Scripture were buttressed by the support of philosophical certainty. A premium was placed on systematic thought supported by an elaborate rational basis.

In an effort to demonstrate the plausibility of the Christian faith, many Orthodox theologians made extravagant claims for reason and philosophy, so that to many an observer it must have seemed that there was very little actually remaining for divine revelation to supply after philosophy had done its best to discover the true nature of reality. . . . The transition from late Orthodoxy to early Rationalism is barely perceptible, inasmuch as Orthodoxy was rationalistic and Rationalism tried to remain orthodox. l

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, <u>From Luther</u> to <u>Kierkegaard</u>, <u>A</u>

#### The Legacy of Leibniz

One of the most influential German philosophers in the tradition of rationalism, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), had been educated by Lutheran scholastics. In a typical rationalistic fashion Leibniz was impressed by the precision and certainty of mathematical demonstrations. In addition to making original contributions to the science of mathematics, he attempted to apply the mathematical methodology as a model for the establishment of truth in philosophical logic and metaphysics. He strove for coherent rational explanations of the ultimate purpose and harmony of everything in existence at a time when competing religious groups expounded conflicting claims for final truth. The aim of philosophy, according to Leibniz, was to verify truth through reason. utilizing clear and distinct ideas independently of ambiguous appearances and revelations unconfirmed by logical reason. The correspondence between truths ascertained in rational thought and the actualities existing in the world Leibniz explained by the hypothesis of a harmony pre-established by God.<sup>2</sup>

Study in the History of Theology (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 77, 83.

<sup>1</sup> Philip P. Wiener, ed., Leibniz Selections (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 93-98, 237-43, 480-85, 522-33; Herbert Wildon Carr, Leibniz (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), pp. 165-76.

Other Philosophical Writings, trans. with introduction and notes by Robert Latta (London: Oxford University Press, 1898); Carr, pp. 59-138.

The Leibnizian philosophy achieved a commanding authority in eighteenth century academic life through the work of Christian Wolff (1679-1754). Wolff was professor of mathematics and philosophy at Halle from 1707 to 1723 and from 1740 to 1754. The University of Halle had been founded in 1694 by pietists hostile to dogmatic rationalism, but Halle had become a stronghold of rationalism and the Enlightenment before many years had passed. When Schleiermacher came as a student to Halle the university enrollment was at its highest point with 1,156 students, 800 of whom were studying theology. Through his teacher Eberhard, Schleiermacher became familiar with the Wolffian climate at Halle.

Wolff's major contribution to philosophical rationalism was the thorough way in which he borrowed the theories of Leibniz, methodically modifying and adapting them. Wolff's elaborate system of philosophy succeeded in popularizing the fragmentary and little known writings of Leibniz through a series of books which were widely read and taught. These books purported to serve the practical aim of substituting rational certainty for revealed certainty. Ostensibly the Wolffian system strengthened the contents of revealed theology by means of universal and necessary truths conclusively deduced via reason. The new philosophy demonstrated that revealed Christian truth was not contrary to reason and modern philosophy.

The metaphysical doctrines of Wolff received wide currency in German universities. The harmonization of reason and revelation assured the continued acceptance of supernatural truth by most educated people at the time. Wolff subsumed four areas under metaphysics: ontology, rational cosmology, rational psychology and rational theology. Ontology was the study of existence in general, while rational cosmology dealt with the world as a whole. The subject of rational psychology was the soul as a simple non-extended substance. Rational theology established God's existence and defined the attributes of God. This Leibniz-Wolffian system of speculative metaphysical truths was further propagated through several books written by Wolff's follower. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762). Baumgarten's books, especially one entitled Metaphysica.3 were commonly adopted as university texts in Germany and were used for many years by Kant. According to the outlook

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Carr, pp. 185-190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Christian Wolff, Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General, trans. by Richard J. Blackwell, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 33-58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Metaphysica (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Friedrich Ueberweg, History of Philosophy, From Thales to the Present Time, Vol. II: History of Modern Philosophy, trans. from the fourth German edition by George S. Morris (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874), p. 118.

of the rational supernaturalists, in agreement with the dogmatic orthodox supernaturalists, the substance of religion consisted in a certain kind of knowledge.

The orthodox dogmatists had appropriated the conceptual framework of secular Aristotelian philosophy to complete their intellectualized formulation of faith in detail. They were satisfied that they had guaranteed the fundamentals of faith to be unassailable. The next generation of philosophers was not convinced that philosophy had been sufficiently employed. Taking the latest philosophical discoveries, these men ventured boldly to prove that the supernatural truths of Christian theology can be established by reason independently of revelation. In spite of this seemingly harmless shift in emphasis, however, it was only a matter of time before philosophers would deny every article of faith that could not be conclusively proven by reason alone.

## Enlightenment Religion

The mentors of the Enlightenment eulogized the virtues of autonomous reason freed from its dependence on past authority. Kant expressed the new spirit in these words:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another.

Sapere aude! "Have courage to use your own reason!"
--that is the motto of enlightenment.1

The practical effect of the full use of reason meant a reduction in the contents of theology. One group of thinkers in the second half of the eighteenth century who abandoned the traditional content of revelation because they judged it unsubstantiated by critical reason were called Neologians, i.e., innovators, modernists. Salomo Semler (1725-1791) is a representative Neologian. During his tenure at the University of Halle, 1752-1791, he attracted notice as an important scholar of the new discipline of Biblical criticism. He analyzed the fallible human factors in the production of the Bible which had heretofore been beyond criticism or doubt. Though a sincere Christian, Semler disputed doctrines of the orthodox theologians such as original sin and predestination.<sup>2</sup>

Natural Religion. -- The intention to transform

Christianity by reducing its contents to a simple core of beliefs universally discoverable by men of reason is known as natural religion (religio naturalis). German expression of natural religion was reinforced by English deism when a German translation of Matthew Tindal's Christianity as Old

Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment," in On History, ed. by Lewis White Beck, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1963), p. 3.

Dillenberger, Protestant Thought and Natural Science, pp. 180-81.

as the Creation appeared in 1741 as the first of numerous English books of this type issued in German editions.

One important early spokesman for natural religion was the Hamburg philologist Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768). His unpublished manuscript, Apology for Reasonable Worshippers of God, intended as a defense of rational religion against atheism and materialism, contained devastating criticisms of Biblical revelation, and thus of Christianity itself. Receiving this manuscript from the daughter of Reimarus, the dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) published some fragments from it in installments anonymously between 1774 and 1786. Lessing included these fragments in his Contributions to Literature and History on the pretense that he had discovered them in the course of his work in the Duke of Brunswick's library at Wolfenbuettel.

While Lessing's views were not as radical as those of Reimarus, he did not hold a traditional concept of revelation and he hoped the fragments would stimulate discussions about the nature of religion. The appearance of several Reimarus fragments provoked a bitter controversy in 1778 when Hamburg pastor Johann Melchior Goeze (1717-1786) attacked Lessing personally. 2 Immediately following

James Sime, Lessing (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner, & Co., Ltd., 1896), II, 193ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 220-23.

his polemical pamphlets against Goeze, Lessing dramatically portrayed the question of true religion in the play Nathan the Wise through three principal characters who are Jewish, Moslem and Christian respectively.

The theology of Nathan is the familiar eighteenth-century thesis that all "positive" religions are equally true to those who believe them, equally false to the philosophers, and equally useful to the magistrates: that the only absolute is the universal "natural religion" of humanity as a whole. What is required of man is not adherence to dogma but sincerity, tolerance, and brotherly love.<sup>2</sup>

Kant's Ethical Religion. -- The repudiation by Enlightenment thinkers of the usual Christian claim to finality and truth eventuated in support for the concept that religion's value lies in providing ethical ideals for practical action.

Lessing and Kant represent the transition to a religion independent of Christian substance, or to a view which accepted Christianity as one illustration of the "religious"... For Lessing and for Kant, revelation at best was the disclosure of what was potentially knowable through human reason.<sup>3</sup>

The religion of morality (ethica naturalis) was most forcefully articulated by Immanuel Kant.

Gotthold Lessing, Lessing's Theological Writings, Selections in translation with an introductory essay by Henry Chadwick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), pp. 62-64; cf. pp. 22-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Henry Chadwick, "Introduction," in <u>Lessing's</u> Theological Writings, p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Dillenberger, <u>Protestant</u> <u>Thought</u>, pp. 182, 183.

Schleiermacher began studying Kant when he was in his late teens at the very time Kant's recently published books were the subject of live controversy. With the encouragement of his father, Schleiermacher continued to examine Kantian works simultaneously with his attendance at Eberhard's lectures on metaphysics at Halle.

In Eberhard, Schleiermacher met a proponent of the old "dogmatic rationalism." The ultimate principle of philosophy was reason in and for itself. Upon this principle, Eberhard constructed an elaborate metaphysical system, and defended the ontological and cosmological proofs for the existence of God. This he did basically because he asserted that reason was norma veri et falsi.<sup>2</sup>

Since Eberhard taught metaphysics from within the Leibniz-Wolffian system, he was an adamant critic of Kant.

Schleiermacher received a clear presentation of speculative metaphysics from Eberhard and compared that with the new critical idealism of Kant. After leaving Halle, Schleiermacher reread Kant's writings previous to his half-hour personal visit with Kant in May 1791.

Kant aimed to destroy the epistemological presuppositions of dogmatic rationalism, particularly as it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 66.

William Alexander Johnson, On Religion: A Study of Theological Method in Schleiermacher and Nygren (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

was commonly taught in German universities of that period. He accused rationalism of speculative flights beyond the limits of possible knowledge. In explaining his reason for attack on the venerable philosophers Kant explained, "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith."

Kant's intention to define the requisite conditions for the possibility of acquiring knowledge necessarily involved a restriction of the realm of inquiry. The perennial and inconclusive disputations among speculative thinkers would persist indefinitely unless the unwarranted pretensions of traditional metaphysics could be curbed. the Critique of Pure Reason Kant approached metaphysics by directing attention to the crucial question of manner, scope and limits of knowledge. Kant's epistemological system begins with the common-sense assumption that the thinker is aware of reality outside himself. The possibility of acquiring any knowledge whatsoever is dependent upon the reception of empirical data. Phenomena appearing to the perceiver through the senses are intuited in a temporal and spatial form. Space and time are not essential properties of things-in-themselves, although appearances of things as perceived must occur in the pure forms of space and time. The manifold of intuited appearances does not

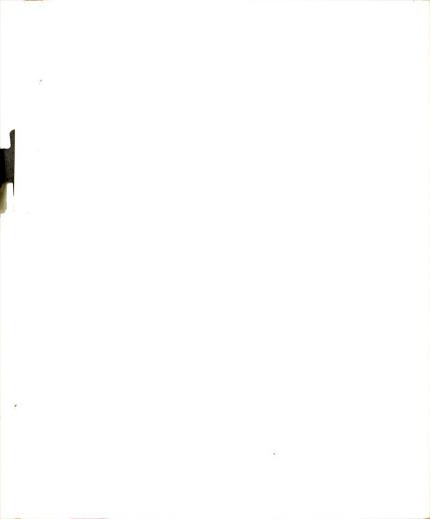
lmmanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929), p. 29.

become objective until the perceiver organizes those intuitions by means of the subjective categories of the human mind. In other words, the cognitive process can establish objective knowledge, Kant thought, not because the mind conforms to an external appearance, but rather because the appearance is objectified by the subjective categories of the human mind.

The proper sphere of knowledge is confined to the phenomenal world of appearances occurring in space and "Since that which is not appearance cannot be an object of experience, the understanding can never transcend those limits of sensibility within which alone objects can be given to us." 1 Kant admits that a thing-in-itself may be different from the appearances man is capable of apprehending as an object of knowledge. Any non-phenomenal entity Kant termed noumenon, which remains to man "an unknown something,"2 since it is in principle unknowable without a corresponding representation in time and space. This is the crux of his criticism against the supernaturalists and rationalistic metaphysicians. The hypothetical supersensible noumena can never be the object of knowledge, in spite of the human mind's natural tendency to reach beyond the circumscribed limits of phenomenal appearances. Any attempt to defy the confines of the phenomenal realm,

<sup>1</sup>Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p. 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 273.



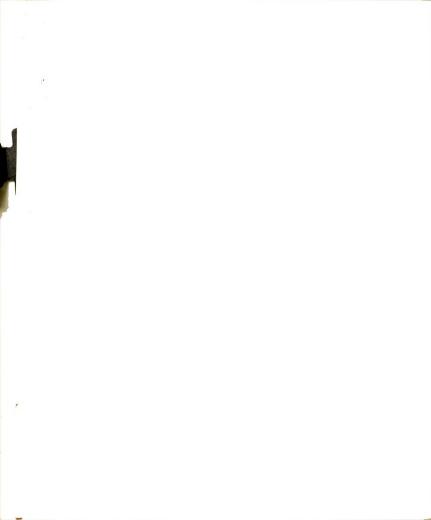
Kant said, must inevitably result in illusions rather than reliable knowledge.

The metaphysics of Wolff is specifically and systematically refuted in the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>. The title of this section relates to Kant's rejection of all dialectical arguments. A dialectical argument attempts to discover the unconditioned ground of all experience on the basis of a conditioned series available in human experience. Kant's paralogisms illustrate the futility of attempting to construct a proof using a formally fallacious syllogism whose defect is an ambiguous middle term. In his analysis of the paralogisms Kant renounces the tenets of Wolff's rational psychology which claimed that the soul exists as a substance, the soul is simple, the soul has identity through time, and the soul exists independently of external objects.

The antinomies of reason are inescapable paradoxes between certain pairs of propositions whose opposing members are contradictory, and yet each has allegedly been proven true by some writer in the name of reason. One side of the antinomies is parallel to Wolff's rational cosmology. These disputes about the beginning of the world, simple substances, freedom, and unconditional substance can never be resolved, according to Kant, since space, time and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 297ff. <sup>2</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 328-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup><u>Ibid</u>., pp. 383-484.



causality relate exclusively to phenomena, and can never be applicable to noumena.

Wolff's rational theology is denied in the "Ideal of Pure Reason." Kant maintained that reason cannot demonstrate God's existence by means of any of the three traditional proofs. The concept "God" is merely a noncontradictory idea of the mind which is thinkable. Certainty regarding God's existence can neither be proved nor disproved, since there are no sensible intuitions which correspond to this idea. Kant declined to entertain the likelihood of there being any such thing as a supersensuous intuition. God is an example of the "problematic" concept of reason defined as a conceivable non-contradictory possibility that can neither be proved nor denied. This precludes the vindication of rational or natural theology by reason in the interest of securing the theoretical foundations of science, but has simultaneously rendered atheism, determinism and materialism impossible of proof.

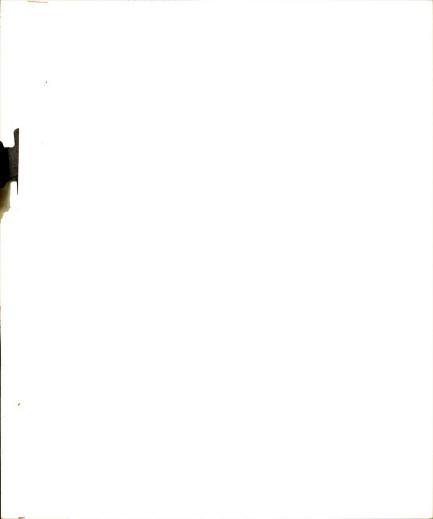
Three problematic ideas of speculative reason

(i.e., God, freedom, immortality) appear in Kant's <u>Critique</u>

of <u>Practical Reason</u> as postulates. Kant says, "By a postulate of pure practical reason, I understand a theoretical proposition which is not as such demonstrable, but which is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 485-531.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 271-72, 292-93.



an inseparable corollary of an a priori unconditionally valid practical law." The function of reason is practical when man's reason effectively determines his will toward the fulfillment of the moral law. The <u>summum bonum</u> of rational man, according to Kant, is moral perfection and its resulting happiness. The efficacy of the practical employment of reason in ethical action is significant due to the assumption of a "universal moral predisposition in human nature."

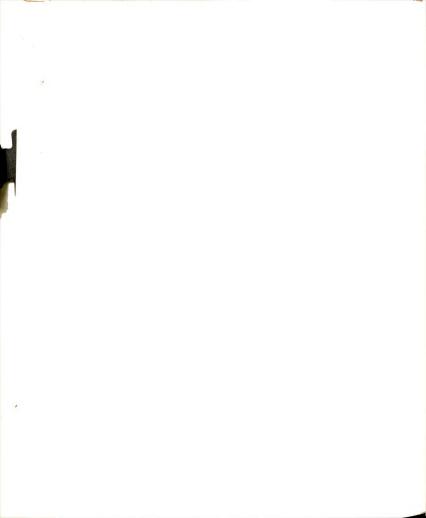
God is postulated by Kant to serve the functional role of guarantor of the moral order wherein fulfillment of the moral law assures happiness. According to this rational religion God's existence is not an objectively established fact of theoretical knowledge. On the contrary, the existence of God is assumed because of a subjective moral necessity from practical reasons in the moral argument. God is the moral lawgiver. The moral law leads to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Immanuel Kant, <u>Critique of Practical Reason</u>, trans. by Lewis White Beck, <u>Library of Liberal Arts</u> (<u>Indianapolis</u>, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953), p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, trans. by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 128-36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, pp. 5, 95, 132, 170-71.



religion. Religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands." The moral law is contained in the universally valid categorical imperative: "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law." The reason directs the will to obey the moral law from duty, rather than according to sensuous incentives or natural inclinations.

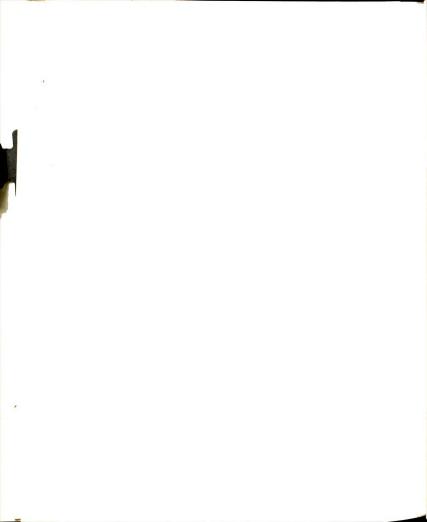
Kant insists that the moral law would be meaningless if the command to obedience could not be actualized. While natural necessity in the phenomenal world is affirmed, freedom of the will is postulated since genuine choice is a necessary ingredient of ethical action. The postulate of immortality is based on Kant's conviction that the ultimately perfect fulfillment of the moral law by man must not be limited by time.<sup>3</sup>

Kant's treatment of religion represents the fulfillment of Enlightenment reason in secularizing Christianity and reducing the content of religion to a few "reasonable" fundamentals without entirely abandoning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kant, <u>Critique of Practical Reason</u>, p. 134; cf. Religion within the Limits, pp. 79, 100, 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 30.; cf. Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. by Lewis White Beck, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1959), p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Kant, Critique of <u>Practical Reason</u>, pp. 126-28.



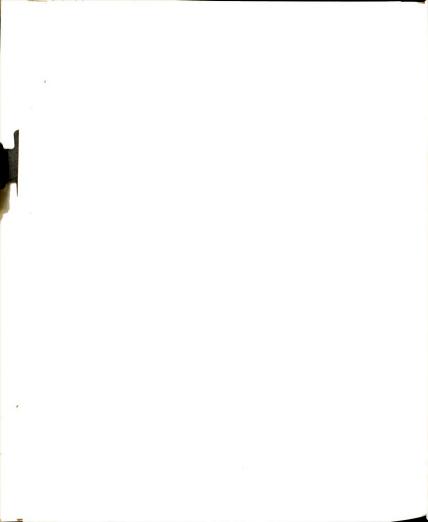
Christian concepts. In his attempt to avoid an anthropomorphic image of God, Kant created an impersonal lawgiver. The rejection of supernaturalism leaves the question of divine help ambiguous. The stubborn resistance of man's "radical evil" remains to be overcome through the rule of reason. Man is obligated to become "worthy of divine assistance" with the vague hope "that grace will effect in us what nature cannot, provided we have made maximum use of our powers." The value of prayer lies in its influence on one's own moral disposition. The Bible can be a useful aid in instilling morality, though it is not necessary to the religion of reasonable morality. In the ethica naturalis Jesus is extolled as the paragon of moral perfection whose atonement is a powerful moral example to be emulated. Thus, religion's essence lies in its effectiveness in motivating moral action of practical utility to society.

## Reaction and Protest

Theology had been the primary intellectual concern in Germany for several generations. In the eighteenth century this concern was embodied in the rationalism of dogmatic orthodoxy and Enlightenment philosophy. German thinkers zealously praised the certainties realizable

<sup>1</sup>Kant, Religion within the Limits, p. 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 179; cf. pp. 162, 183.

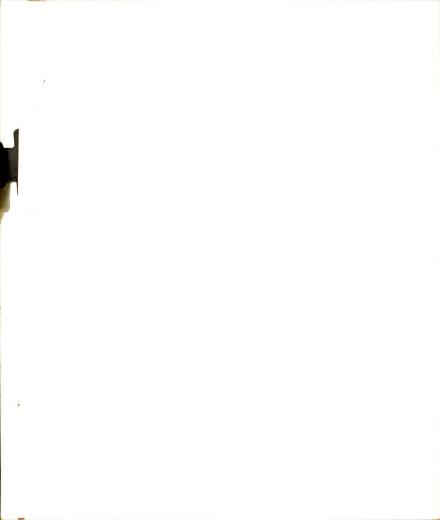


through reason alone, whereas in Britain and France the philosophical empiricists shifted attention to the sensory data of experience and became more cautious about the power of pure reason. During the last half of the eighteenth century resistance to rationalism developed in Germany.

The reaction against the narrowness of the approved scientific methods of the eighteenth century had begun first in the fields of art and religion; it was there that the utter inadequacy of the two dominant scientific ideals of rationalism and empiricism was first felt. Religion could not be conceived as a mere set of scientific propositions, and art was obviously more than a system of rational rules.1

Rationalism was enthralled by the relatively unlimited capacity of reason in human affairs. Pure mathematics was its model of precise reasoning. An amazingly complex system of consistent truths could be explicated by deduction from a few self-evident axioms. Gradually reason was directed toward nature with greater intensity than had previously been the case. This resulted in the unprecedented growth and development of the natural sciences. Formerly, the natural world had been mainly an object of mystery understood to be created and governed by a divine being. The new sciences through refined methods of observation and a sophisticated use of discursive reason now provided reasons to replace ignorance and mystery. Every small gain inspired further confidence in man's ability to

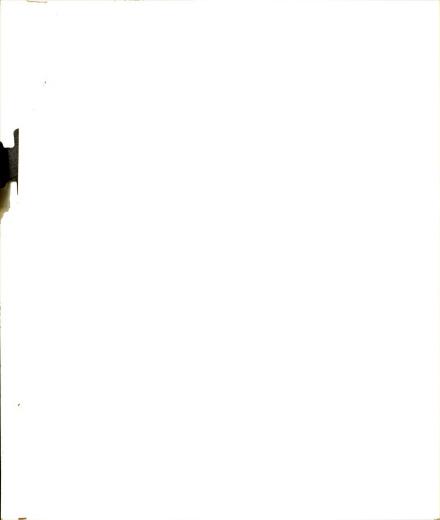
lJohn Herman Randall, Jr., <u>The Career of Philosophy</u>, Vol. II: <u>From the German Enlightenment to the Age of</u> Darwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 79.



explain the impenetrable mysteries of nature, thus enhancing reason in public admiration and respect. Revelation seemed less important when the exhaustive use of reason supplied precise answers and explanations. Extreme confidence in the capacity of human reason to expand knowledge meant an exhilarated feeling of control over nature, in place of dependence on nature controlled by God. The natural world, as described by Newtonian science, was an orderly, mechanical object capable of being analyzed and interpreted according to universal laws.

Philosophical traditions, such as that of Wolff, posited a logical identity between abstract thought and actual reality. The concepts of formal logic used rationally afforded a means to describe the structure of reality. A general optimism pervaded this logical analysis and systematization of knowledge by Enlightenment thinkers. In one sense, Kantian epistemology, in a way similar to Hume's empiricism, represented a criticism of confident rationalism. On the other hand, Kant's philosophy has been characterized as the self-critical apex and fulfillment of the whole Enlightenment movement. I "Kant's philosophy is the first to bring to full consciousness the tendency and spirit of his time; in his thought the strengths and

lFrederick H. Burkhardt, "Introduction" in Johann Gottfried Herder, God, Some Conversations, trans. by F. H. Burkhardt, The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940), pp. 21-23; cf. Randall, Career of Philosophy, II, 106; Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 150.

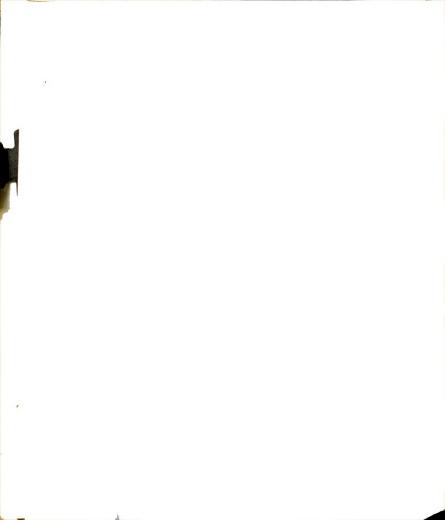


limitations of theological rationalism are fully realized." Kant was convinced that reason was effective in both its theoretical and practical applications, providing reason was properly employed. Thus, Kant's critical philosophy became the object of attack by numerous authors in the general reaction against the Enlightenment.

## The "Faith and Feeling" Philosophers

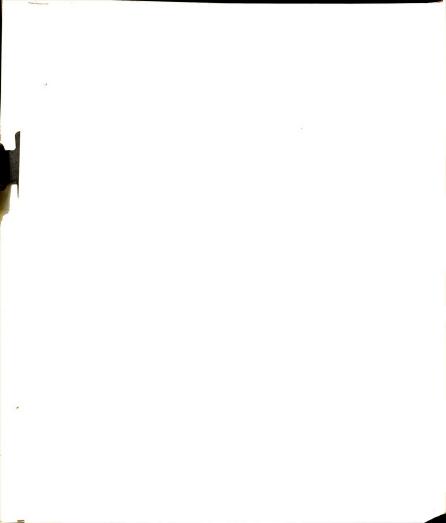
One aspect of the revolt against rationalism was expressed through the so-called "faith and feeling" philosophers (Gefuehlsphilosophie). The most explicit advocate and exponent of this anti-rational movement was Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788). Hamann, a native of Koenigsberg and friend of Kant, was well-known at that time as the "Magus of the North." Hamann had been influenced by Hume's attacks upon the assumptions of rationalistic philosophy. The conviction that feeling is more significant than reason led Hamann to protest vehemently against the exaggerated role assigned to reason, especially as it was embodied in the Wolffian system. He despised the rationalists' preoccupation with lifeless abstractions because this overshadowed the vitality of real life as experienced. He claimed that this one-sided emphasis overvalued discursive reason, thus severely restricting knowledge.

Theology, A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 42.



Subsequent to a fragmentary study of several disciplines, and having held positions as diverse as a tutor and a businessman, Hamann underwent a religious conversion experience in London in 1758, at a time when he was in a state of poverty and confusion. A return to the Lutheran faith of his childhood influenced his thinking and generated a religious enthusiasm that earned him the reputation of a pietist and mystic. He pointed to the irrational aspects of life with their inherent contradictions and inconsistencies, which he held were ignored by philosophy in the search for intelligibility. Hamann felt that true understanding cannot be expressed in abstractions of life established independently of all tradition, belief and experience.

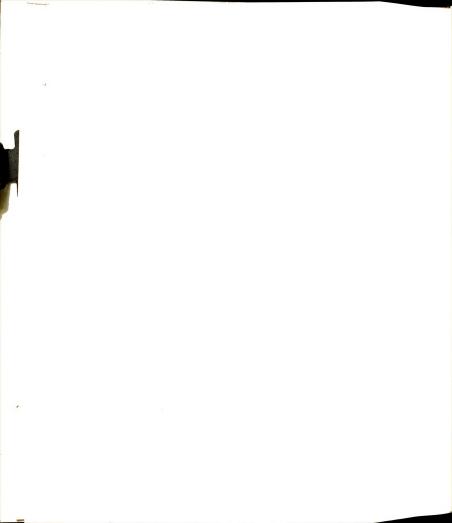
Hamann, an apologist for Christianity, appealed for faith of the heart. A knowledge of the concrete, complex experiences of life, he taught, necessitated apprehensions received through immediate intuitions rather than reasons of the mind logically deduced. His hostility to the Enlightenment led him to an unrestrained praise of feelings and the spontaneity of the emotions. Considerable attention was devoted to language by Hamann, who considered language a natural expression of the innermost soul of man rather than an artificial or arbitrary convention. Language and arts were understood as spontaneous products of a divine revelation. Discursive reasoning was not considered



adequate to express fully the mysterious nature of existence.

Hamann was widely known in his own day, although today he is remembered largely for his influence on his friends Jacobi and Herder, two other "faith and feeling" philosophers. Together these three held a high positive regard for feelings as a more significant means of knowing reality than are concepts of the understanding. Gefuehlsphilosophie resisted inanimate abstractions which simplified and reduced the contents of life's actual experiences by omitting many concrete details. Recognition of the primacy of feelings dictated a pronounced stress on the particular and individual character of existence. In opposition to orthodoxy, the theoretical was considered definitely secondary to real life, where reason is united with sensuous experience. These thinkers were explicit in unanimously criticizing so-called rational religion as wholly inadequate.

The clearest interpreter of <u>Gefuehlsphilosophie</u> was Friedrich Henrich Jacobi (1743-1819). His early life was influenced by Pietism through his participation in the sect, <u>die Feinen</u>, which had originated in Holland. From his sixteenth to twentieth years he studied at Geneva, where his German philosophical training in an ecclectic rationalism mixed with some British empiricism was supplemented by exposure to French writers. Under LeSage he became familiar with the French empiricists and

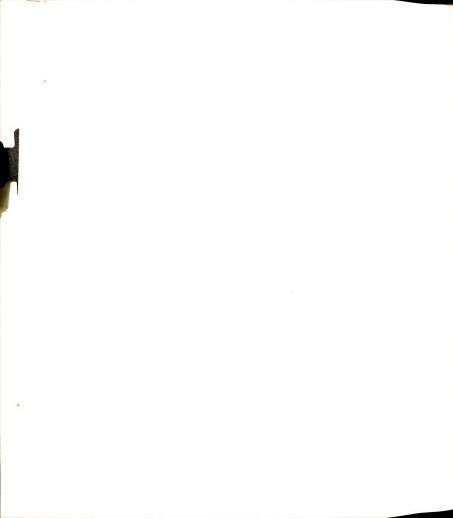


encyclopedists. Together with Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813) he founded the literary journal <a href="Der Merkur">Der Merkur</a>. He became the president of the Academy of Sciences at Munich and with his <a href="Politische">Politische</a> Rhapsodie</a> he was one of the first to introduce Adam Smith's theories to the German public. Letters on religious and philosophical issues were exchanged between Schleiermacher and Jacobi.

The writings of Jacobi are unsystematic and lack logical consistency. He exhibits an antipathy to all demonstrative systems and furthermore he assails the impotence of all purely rational knowledge. While he does not condemn natural science, he insists that discursive reasoning is always limited in the conclusions it reaches, especially when speculative reason is directed beyond sensory objects. Jacobi's epistemology assumes that the thinker is aware of reality beyond himself which is revealed directly through immediate intuition. According to him, there is an objective reality in phenomena which thought discovers. His dualism affirms that in life man encounters real individual objects existing externally to himself that he is able to perceive by direct rational intuition.

Frequently he employed the term "faith" with an intended meaning synonomous with his use of the word "reason," especially in the later years of his life.

There are, then, two faculties of perception, Sense and Reason (or Faith). . . . Sense, on the one hand, reveals the sensible real, the real of the external world of sense objects. Reason, on the other hand, reveals the

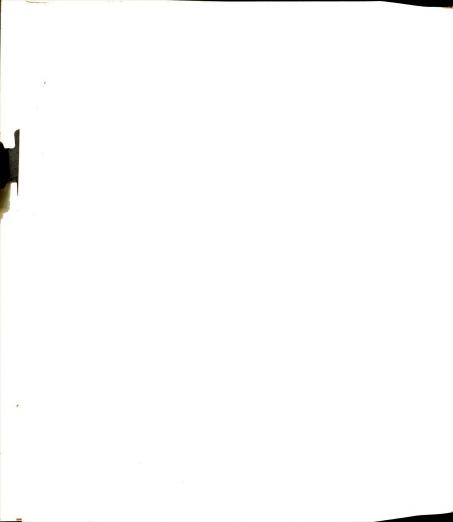


supersensible or spiritual objects. The process of the first is an impression, and that of the second is a kind of feeling. The conceptions of the first are called objects; those of the second are called Ideas.

Faith is immediate intuition of supersensible reality. Logical knowledge of the intellect, he thought, deals with formal and partial facts. Jacobi's study of the philosophers convinced him that the only logically consistent rational philosophy was that of Spinoza, which he held ended in atheism, a position entirely contradictory to Jacobi's personal life experience and conviction. Rejecting the subjective basis of Kantian categories. Jacobi interpreted those notions as objective dimensions of man's experience of objects which can never be proved. "We believe that objects exist independent of us, and exercise causality between themselves and us. We have no other grounds for believing this than the fact that we feel it to be so." 2 Jacobi's study of Hume led him to agree that belief was the guide of life, although any explanation of the basis of belief must remain a mystery, in his opinion. Knowledge begins with individual things immediately experienced and even philosophy must proceed by faith. Faith (Glaube) is the faculty of thought through which objects

<sup>1</sup> Alexander W. Crawford, The Philosophy of F. H. Jacobi (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Norman Wilde, <u>Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: A Study in the Origin of German Realism</u> (New York: Columbia College, 1894), p. 62.



are presented in the intuition of reason (<u>Vernunftanschauung</u>). The immediate consciousness of objects is experienced as feeling (Gefuehl).

Feeling becomes the goal of all development. The whole rational organism is only for the combining of facts given in feeling. . . The primary fact of his own life, as of all his associates in that period, was feeling. All science, all art, all religion, was of value only as ministering to the individual life of emotion. I

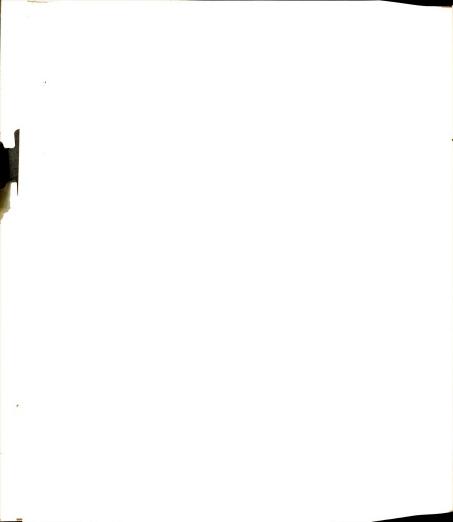
To Jacobi, God, freedom and immortality are not mere postulates as Kant assumed, but are facts directly apprehended by faith through feeling. God's existence is not to be proven, it is a self-evident inner awareness of feeling. As in Schleiermacher, feeling represents the unity of thought and being.

Inasmuch as Jacobi's philosophy was not suited to found a philosophic school, his legacy remains

the influence which Jacobi exercised over a group of men whose only bond in common was their debt to him and Kant. These men were Fries, Schleiermacher and Beneke. However diverse their systems are in their completion, they all contain this element borrowed from Jacobi--the importance of immediate feeling. And yet perhaps it were a more correct statement to say that Jacobi's writings were the means by which their already latent thought was brought to expression, for it is a significant fact that Fries and Schleiermacher grew up in the same environment which was the source of Jacobi's doctrine--their parents were members of the Bruedergemeinde.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 51, 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 74; cf. Dilthey, <u>Gesammelte Schriften</u>, IV. <u>Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels und andere Abhandlungen</u> zur <u>Geschichte des deutschen Idealismus</u>, 282.



Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773-1843), a native of Barby, was a philosopher who perpetuated the emphasis of Jacobi to the succeeding generation. He spoke of sensible phenomenon as an object of knowledge and the suprasensible thing-in-itself as an object of rational faith. The mediating link between knowledge and faith was called a presentiment (Ahnung). Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780-1849), who with Schleiermacher was one of the members of the original faculty at the University of Berlin, was a disciple of Fries. One early book summarizing the critiques of Schleiermacher's dogmatics divided the responses into four groups: the supernaturalists, the rationalists, the Friesians and the Hegelians.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) left the very modest circumstances of his child and youth in Morungen, East Prussia and became a student at the University of Koenigsberg in 1762. He was an enthusiastic student of Kant, who looked upon Herder as his favorite pupil. A lifetime friendship was established at this time also with Hamann, who inspired many of Herder's literary interests in opposition to the Enlightenment. Both Hamann and Kant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Cf. Friedrich Ueberweg, <u>History of Philosophy</u>, II, 195, 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Friedrich Wilhelm Gess, <u>Deutliche und moeglichst</u> vollstaendige Uebersicht ueber das theologische <u>System Dr. Friedrich Schleiermachers</u> (Ruetlingen: Ensslin und Laiblin, 1837).

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directed his attention to Rousseau's writings, which idealized the primitive, the natural and the original in contrast to the artificial elements of culture. At the age of twenty Herder was appointed teacher of the cathedral school in Riga, Livonia through the influence of Hamann.

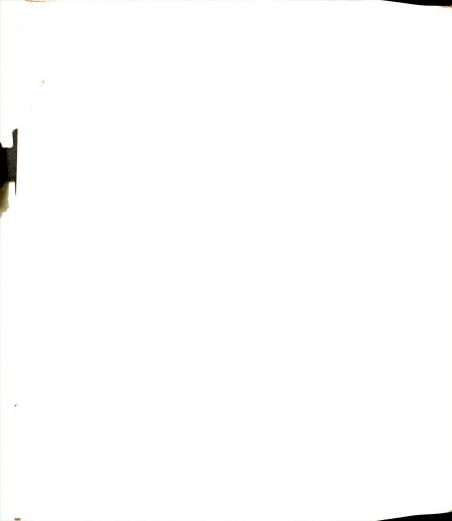
Later during a period of European travel and medical treatment at Strassburg, Herder cultivated another enduring friendship upon meeting Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

During the winter of 1770-71, much of which Herder was obliged to spend in his room, Goethe often kept him company. During the long winter evenings they conversed, read aloud and exchanged thoughts. . . Above all, Herder so impressed Goethe with the idea of being true to oneself and to one's nationality that the latter turned away from French to German literature. Goethe, for his part, recognized the benefits which he derived from his intercourse with Herder and freely acknowledged his indebtedness.<sup>1</sup>

Following Herder's five years' service as pastor at Bueckeburg, Goethe was instrumental in securing Herder's appointment in 1776 as General Superintendent of the Lutheran Church in Weimar, where he remained for the balance of his life.

In common with Hamann and Jacobi, Herder emphasized the vitality of feeling and wrote against Kant's rational philosophy, especially in his <a href="Kalligone">Kalligone</a> and <a href="Metakritik">Metakritik</a>. Herder's philosophy of history explained the unity of human

IRobert Reinhold Ergang, Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 68-69.



life in the world as a relationship between various cultural organisms. Each nationality (Volk) evolved spontaneously on the basis of the collective experience of the group's distinctive language, literature, religion, heredity and physical environment. The essence of each particular group (Volksgeist) was interpreted as one unique expression of humanity. Herder's early study of Leibniz is credited with his fascination with the individuation of reality. The underlying monistic tendency present in Herder's vision of the unity of man and the universe is related to his admiration of Spinoza. The drama of history is a manifestation of divine immanence. Herder entered the Spinoza controversy with the publication of Gott, Gespraeche ueber Spinoza's System in 1787, which portrayed Spinoza as a theorist of the immanence of God.

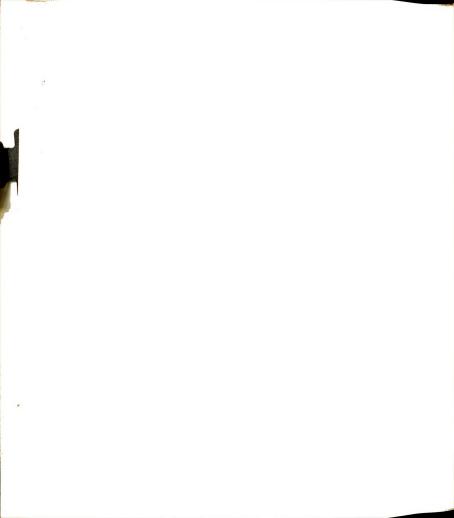
Herder takes up a very reasonable position between Jacobi and Mendelssohn, combining the "faith" which Jacobi wished to substitute for "reason" and the "rationalism" which Mendelssohn wished to substitute for "faith" in an ideal of faith tempered by reason.1

Religion is, therefore, more truly the expression of faith and feelings than reason, according to Herder.

## Moravian Pietism

A dissatisfaction with the thought and life of the Protestant Church in Germany began to manifest itself

Johann Gottfried Herder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 80.



clearly in the late seventeenth century. Some people within the Church were disillusioned by the polemical wrangling of the theologians, the religious wars, and the accretion of rational philosophy in theology. This protest against the formalism of orthodoxy is known as pietism.

Pietism was one of the forces which brought the modern age in the religious life of Germany. It preceded rationalism, and, unlike the latter as it was in spirit and interest, it yet prepared the way for it by weakening the hold of the ecclesiastical institution with its creeds and sacraments. It was as individualistic as rationalism, though in a very different way, and in Germany at least it represented, on the whole, advance not reaction in the development of religious thought.

. Its great influence was before long undermined by rationalism, which spread rapidly after the middle of the eighteenth century, but it never ceased to make itself felt, and it became one of the factors in the revival of religion, and the reconstruction of theology at the beginning of the nineteenth century. 1

Pietism originated largely as a church renewal movement dedicated to revitalizing the spiritual life of ordinary Christians. In Germany this movement was found predominantly inside the Lutheran Church, although pietism did not remain exclusively confined within the Lutheran confession. While its primary focus was upon the regeneration of the private life of individual Christians, the pietist revolt against an authoritarian and institutional faith involved explicit criticisms directed against the Church of those times.

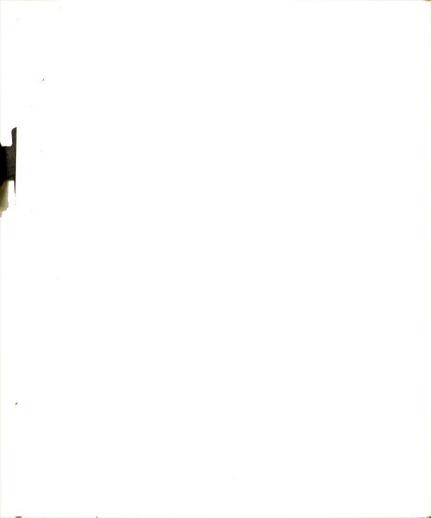
<sup>1</sup> Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Protestant Thought
Before Kant (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1911), p. 161.

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German practice since the Reformation had given the civil government of the princes influence and control over the Church. Critics alleged that ecclesiastical administration had failed to protect the holiness and sacredness of the Church. The aggrandizement of mutual interests between the secular rulers and the church authorities eventuated in the charge of worldliness in the Church. This factor coupled with the formalism of theology was adjudged to be the cause of the apparent decline in morality.

The central issue of Luther's revolution had been justification by grace through faith. In the development of Protestantism, however, faith as a personal relationship of trust between the Christian and God was superseded by the increasingly prevalent concept of faith interpreted in terms of intellectual assent to divine truth. "Pietism represented a return of German Protestantism to the original character of the Lutheran revolt and a reaction to the standardized scholastic orthodoxy in which later Lutheranism took shape." Pietists professed to be reviving the ideals of Luther which they felt had been obscured in the zeal for purity of dogma. The exaltation of doctrine above personal experience fanned the fires of religious controversy as manifested in the strife and conflict among sects and

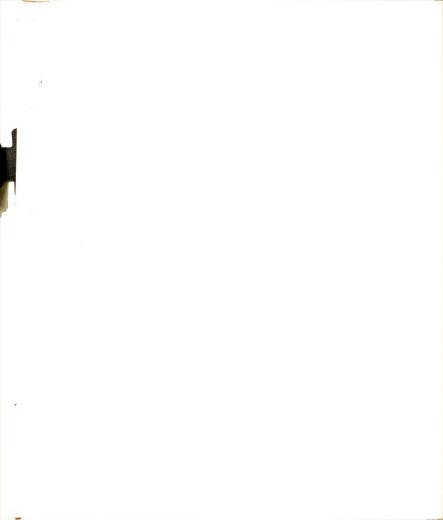
<sup>1</sup> Koppel S. Pinson, Pietism as a Factor in the Officeran Nationalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 13.



indirectly between territorial units. The highly developed scholastic argumentation on every theological topic provided the basis of pietists' accusation of dead formalism against the Christianity they knew.

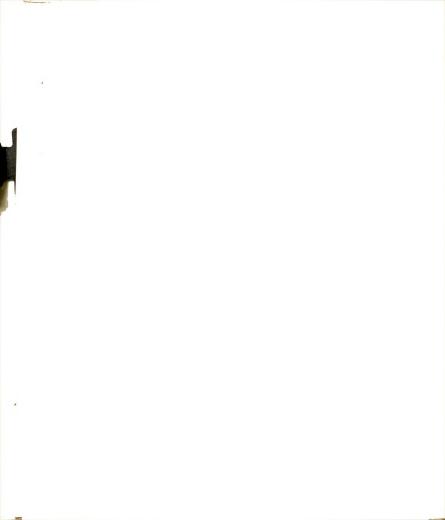
The first significant leader of German pietism was an orthodox Lutheran pastor at Frankfurt on the Main. Phillipp Jakob Spener (1633-1705). Spener was distressed by the disappointing quality of religious and moral conditions in his community. He was an avid reader of devotional literature and was especially impressed by the noted German mystic, Johann Arndt (1555-1621). Spener's preface to an edition of Arndt's popular book, Wahres Christenthum, was published separately in 1675 as Pia desideria oder herzliches Verlangen nach gottgefaelliger Besserung der wahren evangelischen Kirche. This widelvread book was the manifesto of pietism, encompassing both an attack on the existing evils in the Church, as Spener interpreted them, and specific proposals for reform. Spener blamed the lack of spiritual vitality on formalism in orthodox theology, religious indifference and widespread immorality among the common people. Pietism developed in large measure as a lay movement, although it was not anticlerical.

The central theme of Spener's renewal proposals is personal faith and inward holiness. This ideal was to be implemented through the devotional study of the Bible



by all. Spener suggested the establishment of collegia pietatis to make Scriptural study readily available to the laity. Within the Church the organization of small cell groups of converted and committed members (ecclesiola in ecclesia) was contemplated by Spener to actualize the universal priesthood of believers. These intimate groups were intended to provide a regular means by which the personal faith of regenerate Christians would be nourished. This encouraged devotional exercises and subjective introspection wherein the members mutually assisted one another in their progress toward the perfection of holiness. The cultivation of religious feelings was calculated to issue in practical love and service. Justification by faith was to be accompanied by regeneration and sanctification genuinely evidenced by a transformed personal life. The goal of pietism was the renewal of the Church by means of a union between the inner piety of the heart and a corresponding outward evidence of Christian character and conduct in the lives of individual Christians.

Pietism's characteristic priority of the will and emotion over the intellect made it logical for Spener to recommend tolerance and patience toward heretics and unbelievers. Spener offered practical suggestions for the improved training of the clergy. He felt devotional preparation of the heart to be more essential than speculative knowledge of the mind in equipping the clergy for

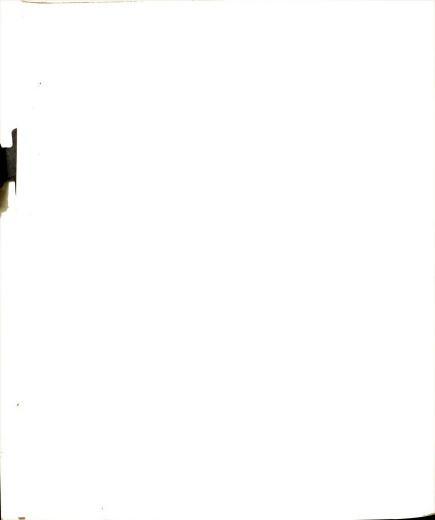


their ministry. Spener pleaded for the independence of theology from philosophy. The model of preaching was a sermon which is simple and practical, and thereby relevant to the spiritual needs of the common man.

The pietist movement developed its reputation due to the organizing genius of the theologian August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). Subsequent to his decisive conversion experience and meeting Spener, Francke initiated the Collegia biblica for Bible study and meditation. The term "pietist" came into usage in 1689 as a derisive epithet for Francke's group. In the following year he was forced to resign his post at the University of Leipzig because of the danger of open controversy with orthodoxy. Arriving in the Halle area, Francke began his prodigious efforts to establish charitable and educational institutions whose pioneering activities made an impact on the nation.

When the Brandenburg government founded the University of Halle in 1694 Francke and his former colleague at Leipzig, philosopher Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), exercised an unmistakable influence over the institution as prominent charter members of the faculty. Francke, with the encouragement of Thomasius, spread the ideals of pietism from this center at Halle.

The role of the University of Halle in the first stages of German nationalism may be compared with that of the University of Berlin in the period of the War of Liberation. Halle was the center of all the most



important intellectual currents, and in Halle most of the important Prussian officials were educated. 

The rapid achievement of predominance by pietism in educational institutions was dissipated by the middle of the eighteenth century with the ascendancy to the Prussian throne in 1740 by Frederick II with his sympathy for the Enlightenment.

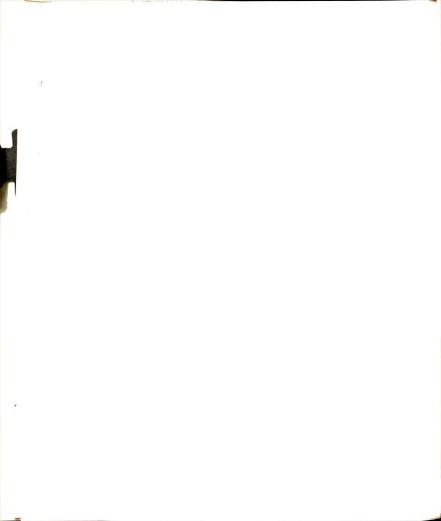
Halle represented more than an academic center for propagating pietism. Francke set a pattern for others to follow by initiating numerous philanthropic projects, such as a school for the poor in 1695 and an orphanage three years later. He was desirous of improving the quality of education as well as extending the benefits of practical learning far beyond the select few who were considered worthy and needful of an education in that society. At the time of Francke's death the schools he founded had an enrollment of 2,207 students under the guidance of 175 teachers.

The most significant achievement of Pietist education was the influence it exercised on the development of the Prussian public-school system. Francke and the Pietists aroused an interest in the organization of public schools and the personal example of Francke was particularly stimulating. As a result largely of his influence, wealthy citizens and reigning princes became interested in the establishment of public schools.<sup>2</sup>

Pietism extended Christian compassion to those in need with its social welfare activities and achieved marked

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 137.



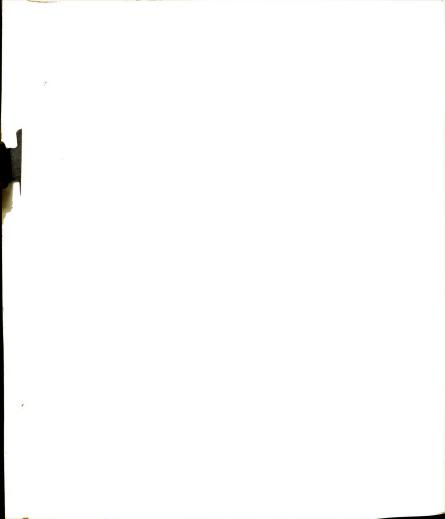
success in evangelizing among the lower classes. In a highly stratified society pietism ignored class distinctions due to the nature of its custom of bringing people together in small groups where the only common element was a personal experience of justification through Christ.

It was the first step to organize such meetings wherever Pietism gained adherents and struck root and it also became the target for most of the criticism and attacks by the enemies and opponents of the new movement. At these meetings people of all professions, regardless of rank or trade, were brought together: students, jurists, doctors, merchants, artisans, and women as well as men. Master and servant knelt together in prayer. The meeting was usually opened by a prayer, then there was either a repetition of the Sunday sermon or a discussion of some section of a devotional book, and then reading from the Bible. I

Pietism represented a renewal movement whose participants were members of the established churches. Its groups were deliberately structured to stimulate the involvement of the laity. The sole example of pietism functioning as a separate sect in Germany is the Moravians.

Count Nicholaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) spent the years 1710-1716 as a student at Francke's Halle Paedagogium. In 1722 a small group of exiles from Moravia appealed to Count Zinzendorf for refuge. These Moravians, religious descendents from the Hussite body known as United Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), seeking an escape from religious persecution in Bohemia impressed Zinzendorf with their piety. He allowed them to settle on his estate at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.



Berthelsdorf, Saxony in Upper Lusatia. Before long the Count resigned his secular position in the Saxon state and devoted all his energies to creating a model community.

They were settled on a hill which formed part of the estate, and laid the foundations there of the flourishing settlement which was to be known to the world as Herrnhut. Others followed in a steady stream, not only from Bohemia and Moravia, but from various centers in Protestant Germany. It was all one to the Count; haunted by the dream of a united Christendom, and resolved to make Berthelsdorf a microcosm for the world to imitate. \(^1\)

Herrnhut was formally founded on August 13, 1727 as the Erneuerte Bruederkirche.

Zinzendorf and the Herrnhuters, in common with other pietists, strove for the revitalization and unity of Christianity. The reason the Herrnhuters developed into a separate sect was no doubt due to the fact that since most in the original group were not Reformed or Lutheran, they did not naturally relate themselves to the existing state churches. Latitude was permitted in the members' acceptance of the unique doctrines of particular confessions. The Herrnhuters, or Moravian Brethren, recognized the orders of Lutheran and Reformed clergy. For example, Schleiermacher's father, a military chaplain of the Reformed Church, ministered to a Moravian congregation in Anhalt without ever becoming a member of the Brethren.

Ronald A. Knox, Enthusiasm, A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950). p. 401.

The communal pattern of Herrnhut was duplicated as other villages were formed under the auspices of the Moravian Brethren. Each settlement became a self-sufficient economic unit composed of individual persons and families who had committed their lives voluntarily to the Brethren community.

Literally the whole life of a Herrnhuter was expended in the faith that he had been called to be member of this corporate whole and to play his part in the representation in and through that entirety of the Savior's continued presence in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The Moravian Brethren believed that their community was called to be a living witness as a leaven in the world for Christ. They carried on extensive missionary enterprises. Sending large numbers of members out of the settlements into the world to places such as America indirectly prevented the hazard of overpopulation in their settlements. Herrnhut had approximately 1,200 inhabitants during the period when Schleiermacher was enrolled in the Moravian school nearby at Niesky.

Each congregation of the Moravian Brethren was separated into "choirs" according to age, sex and marital status. Each choir was further subdivided into "bands" or cells of ten or less members to facilitate mutual assistance in spiritual growth. These organizations were designed to stimulate a lively personal experience of Christ in each individual. In addition to the exclusive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Nelson, p. 453; cf. pp. 150-51.

Moravian settlements, other associations of the Brethren existed in Europe. Town and country congregations existed in some places, while simple fellowships, either organized or informal, met in other places. In addition, there was a "Diaspora" of isolated families in various places who were sympathizers, but not members of any Moravian Brethren society. Schleiermacher's father and mother would be included in the Diaspora.

Pietism espoused a distrust of the worldly, thereby creating a gulf between the secular and sacred concerns of life. The depreciation of philosophy and rational theology is one evidence of this. The Moravian ideal of the settlement community isolated from the corrupting influences of ordinary society suggests a defensive attitude toward the non-religious elements which are so pervasive in everyday life. Schleiermacher rejected the Moravians' negative evaluation of culture.

The most overt threat to spirituality that the Moravian Brethren perceived in the last half of the eighteenth century was rationalism and modern unbelief. The secular humanistic culture of the Enlightenment represented an alien power which the Brethren resisted strenuously. Their schools, which were excellent in several respects, imposed a rigid censorship on books and periodicals. Sensitive leaders tried to keep the world out, lest their faith be subverted by worldly ideas. Schleiermacher's

mother expressed relief that her children, safely in the Moravian schools, would be spared "the soul-endangering opinions, principles, and habits that are so prevalent in the present times. Alas! how should we have been able to preserve them from the subtle poison of the present times?"

Schleiermacher and his closest friends smuggled in reading material to expand the scope of their learning beyond the narrow limits of the anti-rationalistic stance of the Herrnhuters. When the inquiring activities of their little "philosophy club" were uncovered the boys were forbidden to meet for fear their critical studies would imperil their faith. The failure of this repressive discipline ended in Okely's expulsion and Schleiermacher's crisis with both his teachers and father. Young Schleiermacher lamented:

A dissenter like myself cannot be tolerated here: they fear that I may impart to others the dangerous poison.
... It is the insufficiency of the proofs given here in support of certain doctrines, as well as the fact that the opinions of dissenters are either passed over in silence or mentioned without any reference to the reasons on which they are grounded, and also the absence of every opportunity for investigating these subjects myself, together with my natural predilection for whatever is evidently suppressed, that is the cause of my having gradually attained the point where I now am.<sup>2</sup>

The central emphasis of pietism was the supernatural feeling of faith in Christ. This experience was described

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

as a feeling of the heart experienced through direct intuition by the individual believer rather than a cognition of universal religious truth reached through mediate rational thought. As the movement grew there was a transition from the testimony of a spontaneous conversion toward an almost standardized pattern of regeneration of dubious authenticity. The renewal movement that had purported to restore a genuine personal experience of justification which had been eclipsed by preoccupation with dogmatic assent generated a new orthodoxy.

Count Zinzendorf held definite convictions about the essential, basic content of Christian belief, in spite of his tendency to minimize detailed differences between confessions. The most authoritative statement of Moravian theology was contained in <a href="Idea fidei fratrum oder kurzer">Idea fidei fratrum oder kurzer</a>
<a href="Begriff der christlichen Lehre in den evangelischen">Idea evangelischen</a>
<a href="Bruedergemeinen">Bruedergemeinen</a> written at Barby in 1778 by Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg (1704-1792).

The Herrnhuters claimed to establish their doctrines on Biblical revelation. In contrast to Enlightenment philosophers they assumed the doctrine of original sin. Schleiermacher reported his personal

struggle generated by the views held among the United Brethren relative to the doctrines of the natural corruption of man and the supernatural means of grace, and the manner in which these doctrines were interwoven with every discourse and every lesson.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ib<u>id</u>., p. 6.

The sinful state of man, they believed, requires the atoning sacrifice of Christ to effect salvation. "Their Christology was beyond question in its orthodoxy. There is actually not a single point at which even the most orthodox could fundamentally differ with Spangenberg's work." Schleiermacher appreciated the centrality of Christ, but became skeptical about their literal interpretation of the atonement theory and resisted all pressure exerted to enforce complete agreement with their strict Christology.

The aspect of Moravian religion which most deeply affected Schleiermacher was the vivid feeling of communion with the divine. He appropriated the original ideal of authentic religious experience stressed by the pietistic movement while simultaneously rejecting the later Moravian insistence on a common theological uniformity. Schleiermacher felt gratitude to the Moravian Brethren for awakening his consciousness to the eternal. Several years after he had been emancipated from the claims of the Moravian religion he wrote to Georg Reimer, his publisher, "I may say, that after all that I have passed through, I have become a Herrnhuter again, only of a higher order."

Nelson, dissertation, "Herrnhut," p. 444.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 284.

#### CHAPTER TV

### SCHLETERMACHER AND GERMAN ROMANTICISM

Schleiermacher moved to Berlin in September 1796 to assume duties as chaplain at the Charité. His six-year residency in Berlin proved to be a crucial time during which he gave expression to his creative thoughts in his first important publications. His personal development through the combination of experiences, education and temperament from his first twenty-eight years became enhanced by exposure to the new cultural currents of Berlin society. Before long he was a participant in the intimate friendships of the Berlin Romantic literary circle. This interaction with such cultured associates stimulated Schleiermacher's intellectual powers to an intense sensitivity and prompted an articulate statement of his innermost feelings. Schleiermacher revelled in the coveted opportunities that came to him in this period, as he said, "during this beautiful time of my life, when I came into contact with so much that was new to me, when so much became broad daylight to me which I had but darkly sensed

before, and for which I had no preparation!" Here in the heady atmosphere of the Romantic circle Schleiermacher shaped his concept of religion for the new day.

Schleiermacher occupied a modest apartment on the third floor of the Charité. In his duties as chaplain he alternated the preaching responsibility with his Lutheran colleague on the staff, which permitted him to preach at various Berlin churches from time to time. During the first winter he regularly visited the homes of Johann Joachim Spalding (1714-1804) and F. S. G. Sack, aristocratic leaders of the Reformed clergy in Germany. At that time, however, Spalding was elderly, and had previously resigned his position due to his displeasure with the reactionary edict on religion of 1788 by Johann Christian Woellner. Sack was an influential ecclesiastical official who acted as a fatherly friend to Schleiermacher. The Charité was a stateoperated institution, then caring for 3,000 persons a year. The lower floors of the building functioned as a nursing home for the aged and the upper part was a 250-bed hospital. Undaunted by controversy, the Lutheran chaplain used his influence to work for reform of the hospital, which was notorious for its inadequate care. Schleiermacher was preoccupied with matters of the mind and spirit.

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, p. 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Redeker, Friedrich Schleiermacher, p. 38.

## The Berlin Literary Circle

Berlin was then a major European city of 142,000 inhabitants, including 4,500 Jews. In Berlin Schleiermacher renewed his friendship with Count Alexander Dohna (1771-1831). Alexander, the eldest son of the East Prussian Junker who had a few years earlier employed Schleiermacher as a tutor, was acquiring experience in government service. Later during the era of the Prussian reform movement, at a time when Stein was forced to relinquish command, Dohna was elevated to national leadership as the Prussian Minister of the Interior with primary responsibility for domestic reforms in a brief ministry between November 1808 and June 1810. Other members of the Dohna family visited Schleiermacher several times in Berlin between 1797 and 1799. Count Dohna introduced Schleiermacher to the remarkable home of Henriette Herz and her circle of friends in the summer of 1797.

Henriette Herz (1764-1847) was the daughter of a Berlin Jewish physician of Portugese ancestry named Dr. de Lemos. By parental arrangement she married the Jewish physician Dr. Marcus Herz when she was fifteen years old. Dr. Herz had been a student of Kant in Koenigsberg in his youth, and he participated in some of the intellectual discussions that centered in his home. Early in 1803 after twenty-four years of marriage with no children, Henriette found herself a widow. She refused Count Alexander Dohna's marriage proposal, preferring to remain

independent. After both her parents had died she received Christian baptism in 1817 at Zossen.

Leading participants of the Berlin Romantic circle (Fruehromantik) often met at the home of this attractive and highly gifted wife of Dr. Herz. It was here that Schleiermacher discovered the Swedish diplomat, Gustav von Brinkmann, his friend from Moravian school days with whom he corresponded until the end of his life. The leader of the early romantic movement, Friedrich Schlegel, came to Berlin from Jena in July 1797 and entered the company of Henriette's friends. Through the encouragement of Brinkmann, Schleiermacher and Schlegel became fast friends.

Thus Schleiermacher came into personal contact with the current leaders of the movement, which on the foundation of Goethe and Kant strove for a new philosophy, art and historical science. These persons and their standard of life found themselves in opposition to the sober and largely political viewpoints accompanying the enlightenment of the era of Frederick the Great, like those which Spalding and Sack with moral propriety advocated. Thus after a few years difficulties arose for Schleiermacher, that brought about his long exile from Berlin.

The new movement was known generally as Romanticism. The title delimits sharply from the other persons of the younger generation the two Schlegels, Tieck, Novalis, Wackenroder, Schelling, and Solger, in whom the same characteristics appeared in a mellow combination. 1

# The German Tradition in Literature

The years 1770 to 1830 encompass a most creative period in German literature. Before this time there were

Dilthey, "Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher," in Gesammelte Schriften, IV, 359.

few great works produced in German. Whereas the French and the English had developed their own standards in literary achievement, Germany lacked a definite native tradition in writing. In academic circles Latin had been the appropriate tongue for centuries. Christian Thomasius was the first person known to have the audacity to deliver an academic lecture in the uncouth German tonque. He set this precedent at the University of Leipzig in 1687. The aristocracy found French to be the most useful and sophisticated language in the early eighteenth century. The German predilection for French is illustrated by two prominent persons. Works of Leibniz which were studied had been written in either Latin or French. The Enlightenment monarch Frederick II was more fluent in French than German, and preferred the former. the late eighteenth century when Schleiermacher was a student at Halle his father repeatedly emphasized the practical value of mastering "the French language, which is now so indispensable."1

The common use of French by Germans represented the hegemony of French culture in Prussia. Nobles attempted to imitate the French style of life. Books and periodicals in the French language published in Germany were not uncommon. It was assumed that good literature would copy the French form. The arbiter of literary excellence in Germany was

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 62; cf. pp. 69, 70, 71, 73.

Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766). Gottsched's inflexible rules for literary composition idealized a narrow French classicism.

A number of young writers manifested their rebellion against the artificial conventions of Enlightenment reasonableness in dramas written between 1775 and 1785. group is known by the title of Fredrich Maximilian Klinger's 1776 drama, Sturm und Drang. Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) was identified with Sturm und Drang in his early works. Sturm und Drang movement originated as a radical reaction against the narrowness of the prevailing formal rigidity in literary criticism. As well as championing spontaneity, enthusiasm and individuality in the face of rationalism, a note of social protest was expressed through the portrayal of the ordinary man as a hero. In style and content these artists exploded with a burst of emotion and irrationalism. This pre-romantic cult felt emancipated from bondage to the rule of reason by affirming the authenticity of subjective imagination, total freedom of artistic expression, and the significance of creative genius and passion.

The <u>Fruehromantic</u> circle of Jena and Berlin renewed an exaltation of subjective intuition from the <u>Sturm und</u>

<u>Drang</u>.

The notion of organic growth and development and the consequent interest in history and in living nature, the arrogation of complete artistic freedom as the birthright of the autonomous divine genius, the trust in spontaneous emotion and instinct: all these were

inherited from the <u>Sturm und Drang</u>, although German Romanticism was not a mere continuation of the earlier movement. 1

The contemporaneous Weimar school exemplified by Goethe and Schiller was admired and discussed by the cultured of the day. Leading citizens gathered at Henriette's salon to reflect on Goethe's latest creative productions.

# The Friendships of the Romantic School

The principals of the <u>Fruehromantic</u> were active participants in the Wednesday Society, along with a variety of other admirers of culture. In addition to Count Dohna and diplomat Brinkmann, public figures such as Gerhard Johann Scharnhorst, the well-known military administrator, shared in the fellowship. Government officials, such as Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt who were personal friends of Goethe and Schiller were seen in the company of Henriette's friends. Wilhelm von Humboldt, with whom Schleiermacher served in the ministry of education in 1809 and 1810, implemented major educational reforms that exerted a lasting effect in German public school policy and practice.

The aesthetic interests of this Berlin circle attracted artists such as Johann F. Reichardt, a composer, and Gottfried Schadow, a sculptor of note. Still other

Lilian R. Furst, Romanticism in Perspective, A Comparative Study of Aspects of the Romantic Movements in England, France and Germany (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 36-37.

representatives of Berlin culture in the Wednesday Society included the Enlightenment publisher Friedrich Nicolai, August Ludwig Huelsen, a writer, the intellectual Jewess Rahel Varnhagen, and later Fichte, the philosopher. One of the most important members of the informal society was Friedrich Hardenberg, the brother of the famous Prussian chancellor, who is better known by his pen-name, Novalis. This romantic poet is remembered for his Hymnen an die Nacht and Die Christenheit oder Europa. Within this illustrious circle Schleiermacher, the Reformed preacher to the Charité, associated with Friedrich Schlegel, Dorothea Veit, August Wilhelm Schlegel and his wife Caroline. The German Romantic School existed as a dynamic communion between a series of distinct personalities.

The romanticists were the pupils of no one individual leader in their midst. Each brought romanticism to fruition in its own individual way. The very character of the whole movement, which aimed at the restoration and maintenance of individual liberty, precluded the adherence to any fixed doctrine. . . "School" means merely that a number of individual writers came together, who recognized in one another just that which made them, and each of them, romantic. The units of this loose association were a number of friendships, which bound groups of two or more closely together.

Around Christmas in 1797 Friedrich Schlegel moved to Schleiermacher's apartment. Both men were sons of clergymen and greatly interested in Greek literature and philosophy. Together they spent many hours sharing their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Robert N. Wernaer, <u>Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany</u> (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), pp. 55-56.

insights by means of mutually rewarding philosophizing. Schlegel conceived an ambitious plan to pool their talents in a translation and commentary on Plato's works that would make this ancient philosophy and modern philological erudition available to the German-speaking world. This project was begun after thorough discussions about its hermeneutics and outline through scholarly and harmonious dialogue. At the same time Schlegel attempted to persuade his brother, August Wilhelm, that they should inaugurate a new literary journal devoted to criticism as a guide to public taste and understanding. This journal, the Athenaeum, was published from 1798 until 1800 as the voice of Fruehromantiker.

During the time Schlegel roomed with Schleiermacher they philosophized together as two kindred spirits, and socialized with the cultured citizens of Berlin. Schlegel introduced Schleiermacher to his brother August Wilhelm (1767-1845), to the poets Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) and Novalis (1772-1801) and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1798), and he also arranged the meeting of Schleiermacher and Fichte. Another member of their set supplied the inspiration for Schlegel's romance, Lucinde, which was published in June of 1799 one month before he moved from Schleiermacher's apartment.

Brendel, the daughter of the Jewish Enlightenment philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, was one of the central personalities in the Berlin Romantic circle. Her father

had prudently arranged her marriage to a successful Berlin banker, Simon Veit, who did not, unfortunately, have an imaginative spirit such as his wife possessed and appreciated. Falling passionately in love with Schlegel, she obtained a divorce from her stunned husband in December 1798, after sixteen years of marriage to Veit. Subsequently she took the name of Dorothea, by which she was known in the veiled characterization of the heroine in Lucinde. Within a few months Dorothea and Friedrich Schlegel migrated to Jena to be near Tieck, Novalis and August Wilhelm Schlegel, but were not officially married until 1802. Dorothea was baptized a Protestant in 1804 and became a Roman Catholic with her husband in 1808. The latter years of his life were spent as a political pamphleteer and diplomat in Austria.

The devastating reviews the <u>Lucinde</u> received evoked Schleiermacher's defense through publication of <u>Confidential Letters Concerning Lucinde</u> within a year of the appearance of <u>Lucinde</u>. Schleiermacher was incensed by the narrow-minded judgments he felt revealed a lack of insight into the nature of love. He aimed to restore the unjustly damaged reputation of his author friend. Also at this time

lished as one volume. An analysis of them is found in George Brandes, Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature, Vol. II: The Romantic School in Germany (New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1923), pp. 81-108 and Wernaer, pp. 230-52.

Schleiermacher was personally vexed by the lack of true oneness between his friend Eleanore Grunow and her husband. Upon the subject of August Wilhelm Schlegel's domestic turmoil, Schleiermacher lamented, "Upon the whole there is no such difficult matter in the world as marrying. When I look at all my friends, far and near, it makes my heart sad to think of how few happy marriages there are among them."

August Wilhelm Schlegel had achieved a substantial reputation as a respected literary critic. In Jena he enjoyed a good relationship to Schiller and Goethe. The more than three hundred reviews he penned are recognized as masterpieces of literary criticism and contain implicitly the aesthetic principles of Romanticism which were systematically delineated in his Berlin Lectures on Literature and Art delivered during the winter of 1803-1804. His name was popularized through his nine-volume Shakespeare translations and translations of Dante and Calderón. He was ably assisted by his wife, Caroline.

Caroline, the daughter of Professor Johann David Michalis, a German Orientalist of Goettingen, was married to Dr. Boehmer, a physician, for four years before his death in 1788, whereupon she traveled around the country. At Mainz her zeal for the French Revolution culminated in her arrest and degrading imprisonment for seven months. This woman whose home-town had issued special edicts against

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 273.

her for her scandalous morality and Jacobin sympathy, was rescued from her humiliation in 1792 by marriage with August Wilhelm Schlegel, a former student acquaintance at Goettingen.

The programme of the Romantic School was elaborated in Friedrich Schlegel's 1803 essay, Gespraech ueber Poesie. The ideals of poetry and its aims had been previously enunciated in the esoteric fragments by Schlegel in the Athenaeum. The Athenaeum was conceived as an avant-garde magazine of aesthetic taste opposed to the propagators of old rationalism exemplified by Nicolai's Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek. The Athenaeum is the one place where the multi-faceted introspective effusions of the chain of personal friendships were printed while they endured.

Naturally, the Schlegel brothers and their wives were regular contributors. Schleiermacher and Novalis added their distinctive essays. The journalist August Ferdinand Bernhardi and Sophie, his wife and Tieck's sister, shared their talents.

The Romantic School had disbanded by 1802. Death had already taken three young writers: Novalis, Wackenroder and Auguste Boehmer, Caroline's daughter. Following her divorce from August Wilhelm, Caroline married Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1775-1854), the philosopher, and moved to Wuerzburg. August Wilhelm Schlegel and Schleiermacher were in Berlin, while Friedrich Schlegel resided in Paris and Tieck lived in Rome.

#### The Middle-Class Orientation

Schleiermacher and many of his associates were representative of the relatively small segment of Prussian society we would call middle-class. In Schleiermacher's youth approximately 85 per cent of the population resided in a rural setting. The center of power lay in the hands of an elite corps of nobility and hereditary landowners. The landed aristocracy, commonly known as Junkers in Prussia, exercised virtually autonomous control over their personal territory and the vast peasant caste who tilled the soil. The lives of the peasants, or serfs, were effectively regulated from birth to the grave on the feudal estate by the Junkers, who had full legal sanctions. The serf served in the household of his lord as a child, spent his youth in the army, and all his life devoted several days a week to tending his lord's fields before he could care for his own family's crops. Customarily marriage required the lord's approval, and the peasant was assured of no choice in education, vocation or place of residence in this static caste society. A rigid social stratification normally precluded social mobility. The towns were of small importance compared to the agricultural segment, and urban society was also hierarchical. Education, especially in a university, was a special luxury reserved for the privileged few of the appropriate class who demonstrated an obvious need for it. In addition to nobility, middle class men sought

education for subordinate positions as experts in the expanding government bureaucracy or in the professions such as medicine, law, theology and teaching. Theology was a favorite field for middle-class students who might hope for one of the scarce ecclesiastical appointments dispensed by the ruling class. Theological graduates would ordinarily be forced to accept positions as tutors in the households of the aristocracy as Schleiermacher did. Very few in Prussian society had any political consciousness or felt an identification with the state.

The middle-class exercised little direct influence on the government. In the absence of an appropriate channel for external political action, it was logical for brilliant middle-class persons, such as the Romantics, to become virtuosos of the inner life.

The Romantic movement was carried out by a generation of young men mostly of the middle class who were disillusioned and dissatisfied with the social order in which they lived and who therefore turned against the ideas which prevailed during the eighteenth century. 1

In its early period German Romanticism was clearly non-political. Later, however, leaders, including Schleier-macher, had an impact on political theory and reality.<sup>2</sup>

Reinhold Aris, <u>History of Political Thought in Germany</u>, from 1789 to 1815 (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1936), pp. 241-15.

An examination of the influence of Romanticism on politics is found in Aris, p. 207ff.; H. S. Reiss, ed., The Political Thought of the German Romantics, 1793-1815 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955); Brandes, pp.

This aspect of Romantic thought was frequently indebted to Herder's concept of the state as an organism.

### The Ideals of Romanticism

In Berlin, the center of the Enlightenment in northern Europe, Romanticism emerged and put the Enlightenment's cultural supremacy on the defensive. Whereas Enlightenment spokesmen emphasized the rational and ordered kind of world described by Newtonian science, the Romantics opposed a materialistic and mechanistic interpretation of both men and nature. They eschewed uniformity and abstraction in order to celebrate the variegated multifariousness they experienced in real life.

Romantics considered feelings and emotions to be more significant dimensions of experience than strictly rational thought. Their thought found expression through direct and immediate intuition rather than in a chain of logical deductions. Romantics marveled at the irrational forces of the human spirit. A self-consciousness about personal feelings resulted in a deliberate cultivation of the inner life of individuals. Members of the Romantic circle encouraged subjective self-examination which

<sup>293-329;</sup> Wernaer, pp. 303-20. Specific references to Schleiermacher are made in Aris, pp. 291-304; Reiss, pp. 33-37, 173-202; Dawson, Friedrich Schleiermacher: The Evolution of a Nationalist; Raack, dissertation, "The Course of Political Idealism in Prussia, 1806-1813"; Raack, "Schleiermacher's Political Thought and Activity, 1806-1813."

stimulated introspection. The <u>Romantiker</u> felt a liberation of the spirit in publicly exposing his private thoughts.

The disclosure of individuality was manifested by the subject through intimate friendships and artistic productions. Each personality was viewed as a unique embodiment of humanity endowed with freedom. Characteristically a friend would encourage his companion to develop fully his uniqueness. Each person was regarded as a singularly valuable concrete aspect of humanity whose individuality was an admired mystery. The Romantic had a feeling of wonder for the unrepeatable individuality of each person. The Romantic movement was linked together by a chain of friendships between people who felt an irresistable need to communicate their innermost selves to others. It was common for one person freely to acknowledge his dependence on specific friends for the fulfillment and flowering of his own individuality. Accounts of these friendships impress the ordinary person today as sentimental or unnatural, but the Romantics sincerely believed that each personality needed to supplement his own self by communing with the individuality of one or more special friends.

Schleiermacher testified to the significance of this type of friendship in his own personal development. In the <u>Soliloquies</u>, written in 1800, recurring references to the significance of his own emerging individuality appear. He confessed,

Everything I do, I like to do in the company of others; even while engaged in meditation, in contemplation, or in the assimilation of anything new, I need the presence of some loved one, so that the inner event may immediately be communicated, and I may forthwith make my account with the world through the sweet and easy meditation of friendship. . . . Only if man is conscious of his individuality in his present conduct can he be sure of not violating it in his future acts, and only if he requires himself constantly to survey the whole of humanity, opposing his own expression of it to every other possible one, can he maintain the consciousness of his unique selfhood. For contrast is indispensable to set his individuality in relief.

Schleiermacher's habit of meditating and studying closely with another person was a pattern he initiated before his association with the Romantics. One example of this sort of significant growth through regular involvement in the life of another is his inseparable companionship with Albertini in the Moravian schools. For several months Schleiermacher enjoyed a similar relationship to Friedrich Schlegel in Berlin. Schleiermacher's deepest mutual friendship, however, was maintained with Henriette Herz. He ordinarily spent several hours with her daily, and they continued their heart-to-heart communication by correspondence after he left Berlin. The morally upright relationship of this pair, frequently seen together in private and public, was the object of gossip and jest that amused the two. Observers might have expected them to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, pp. 37-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 9-10.

marry when Dr. Herz died in 1803 and Schleiermacher had no commitments to other women, but this apparently was not considered.

. . . a relationship of most heartfelt intimacy yet completely dispassionate, a relationship not of love, but of unselfish friendship, is possible. Thus was his relationship to Henriette Herz. Through a natural habit he visited with his gifted and responsive friend nearly every day; little excursions were taken jointly, they would read and study together. They worked at the study of physics together; together they read Goethe's Wilhelm Meister; she became his teacher in Italian, he taught her Greek and introduced her to the books of Plato.!

Romantics are known as lovers of aesthetic beauty. For them the external object perceived represented the interior reality of the artist's individuality. Fruehromantik excelled in criticism and philosophizing rather than establishing a reputation primarily on the production of literary masterpieces. Much Romantic writing took the form of essays and fragments. They rebelled against the prevailing standards of literary excellence by branding the slavish imitation of artistic styles reprehensible artificiality. Originality and creativity were eulogized in their zeal for the maximal exercise of imagination in every type of artistic composition. They condemned practical and outward conventionality in art and poetry in favor of spontaneity.

Haym, Die Romantische Schule, p. 414; cf. Redeker, Friedrich Schleiermacher, p. 41.

The Romantics utilized Herder's concept of organic growth. 1 The Universe was envisioned as a macro-organism. Romantic thought devoted considerable attention to man's relationship to Nature, understood as a dynamic and living organism. Nature, with all its rich complexity and beauty, aroused a feeling of kinship and nostalgia. Each nation represented one natural cultural unitary aspect of humanity, rather than merely political power. An anti-French posture was a consequence of their revolt against imitation in the interest of developing a peculiarly German literary tradition. The guest for authentic culture involved a search for the genius of the past, in contrast to the Enlightenment's tendency to depreciate the past as superstitious and unenlightened compared to the new progressive age of reason. Romanticists tended to idealize the past through their investigation of antiquity. The particular uniqueness of a people, they insisted, expressed itself through its language, folklore, and history. The observed diversities and creativity of various peoples fascinated them. Members of the Romantic circle learned languages, such as Greek, Sanskrit, Italian or English, in order to be able to read foreign masterpieces, and, in some instances, to publish excellent translations. Henriette Herz, for example, knew ten languages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ergang, pp. 192-95, 234-38.

The Romanticists were not content with bringing European literatures within their province, they aimed at harmonizing East and West, Europe and Asia. "Ex oriente lux" became an accepted axiom. . . The Romanticists did not expend all their critical energies on foreign literatures; they were also anxious to recapture the spirit of the earlier periods of their own Germanic past. They became the founders of the modern sciences of comparative philology and literature.1

Romantic writers felt their vocation commissioned them to share sublime thoughts through poetic insight.

Their imagination did not remain tied to the prosaic elements of a mundane world. The deep mysteries of existence attracted their attention and their vision soared toward the Absolute. A reverence for nature frequently inspired a pantheism. One of the themes inciting their creativity was the representation of the Infinite in the finite through symbolism.

The Romanticists theory of art and life thus owes its existence to a mingling of poetry with philosophy,
... Hence its living and moving in a higher world, a different nature. This too is the explanation of all the symbolism and allegory in these half-poetical, half-philosophical works. A literature came into being which partook of the character of a religion, and ultimately joined issue with religion.<sup>2</sup>

The Romanticists believed they were experiencing life on a more profound level than other contemporary intellectuals and ordinary people. Their self-image took on a quasi-religious pathos.

Leonard Ashley Willoughby, The Romantic Movement in Germany (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp. 151, 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Brandes, pp. 40-41.

# The Writing of "On Religion"

Schleiermacher's friends of this Romantic circle were essentially writers. They immediately recognized his fertile and insightful mind from their learned conversations, and were anxious to see a production of Schleiermacher's creativity in polished form. Schleiermacher disavowed any inclination or aptitude for literary achieve-In the morning of November 21, 1797, a surprise birthday party for Schleiermacher was celebrated by two Dohna brothers, Friedrich Schlegel, Dorothea Veit and Henriette Herz. Upon the instigation of Schlegel the merry party repeatedly taunted in unison: "Nine-and-twenty years, and nothing done as yet." At last, Schleiermacher reluctantly promised that he would prepare an original work within the year. Belatedly this pledge was fulfilled by writing On Religion. This book appropriately expressed Schleiermacher's own individuality.

In late 1798 Court preacher Bamberger became incapacitated. Until the king had time to arrange the appointment of a new court preacher at Potsdam, Schleiermacher was sent to fill that pulpit temporarily. Schleiermacher was away from his Berlin friends between February and May of 1799. During this time he found the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 202.

leisure to write the book On Religion expressly for the Romantics. He completed the writing on April 15, sent it to the censor, and arranged for its publication before returning to Berlin. This book of 1799, reissued by Schleiermacher in 1806, 1821 and 1831, found a wide audience. As Rudolf Otto remarked,

It became one of the classical works of theological literature as well as of German national literature.

. . . The spirit of the time around 1800 reflecting its rich fermentation, quests and discoveries, the new questions and objectives, the sympathies and antipathies of the time, the old being overcome, the aspiring innovations in philosophy, religion and ethics, in poetry and life-style, in world-view and estimation of man, we do not wish to say is revealed in any document of that era at the same time so profoundly, certainly not as broadly and diversely, as this. 1

This original work exemplified Schleiermacher's involvement in the Berlin cultural milieu. On the eve of the nineteenth century he revealed his perception of the manner in which religion was commonly understood.

The message of On Religion is addressed to the "cultured despisers" of religion. They held themselves conceitfully aloof from any contact with institutional Christianity. They presumed to have transcended any need for religion by their own poetic insight which lifted them above the vulgar populace. Schleiermacher satirically criticized their contempt for religion throughout the first address. He admitted in advance the risk he ran, inasmuch

<sup>1</sup>Otto, "Zur Einfuehrung," in Schleiermacher, <u>Ueber</u> die Religion, p. 7.

as his efforts might be doomed to futility since the cultured had created their own universe via the imagination, and obviously felt self-sufficient without any resort to eternity. Whereas they ordinarily respected the expertise of persons possessing skill and experience in some specialty, even that of a peasant tradesman, in religion they were most highly suspicious of anything uttered by a theological expert.

Schleiermacher sensed a crisis for religion at the end of the eighteenth century. An accumulation of experiences in various circumstances convinced him that the divergent manifestations of Christianity being expressed betrayed a confusion about the nature of religion itself. Criticisms of Christianity had now eventuated in a low regard for religion in general. Religion in the German heritage had been associated with wars, endless controversies, and inconclusive theological disputations. Especially among the cultured, religion was identified with the <a href="mailto:ancien régime">ancien régime</a> they aspired to transcend. Increasingly religion appeared to be an outmoded element from another era which self-conscious writers considered unintelligent, superfluous and irrelevant to progressive modern times.

The cultured dissociated themselves from religion because it represented primitive folk practices accepted by the ignorant masses. The clergy were suspect since they perpetuated crude beliefs and rituals among the peasants on

behalf of both church and state. This conception of religion's role would have had little resemblance to the needs felt by the cultured despisers who viewed religion with indifference. A simile used by Schleiermacher compared religion to a garment which having gone out of style was passed down to those unable to possess the finest and best. 1

Schleiermacher indicted the sophisticated intellectuals for perpetuating a superficiality similar to that of the common man and the traditional defenders of the faith whom they criticized with such contempt. He accused his cultured friends of closing their minds and refusing to investigate seriously the area of experience religion represented. Schleiermacher himself was disturbed by clergy's preoccupation with externals to the exclusion of a viable and articulate conception of religion. He invited his readers to examine the internal essence of religion itself instead of being content with mere externals, and asked, "Why have you not penetrated deeper to find the kernel of this shell? I am astonished at your voluntary ignorance."

Schleiermacher aimed to overcome the indifference precipitated by distortions of religion peculiar to that society. Duties as preacher to the Charité did not fully

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

challenge Schleiermacher's intellectual capacity, and he did not include sermons preached at the hospital in his collection of published sermons. His sophisticated Romantic acquaintances, however, did pose an exciting challenge to his ability. Believing that they potentially possessed the most receptive spirits, he summoned them to consider religion as the zenith of human experience. He attempted to lead them to discover their artistic interests fulfilled in a focus on religion. Thus, he promised, "I would conduct you into the profoundest depths whence every feeling and conception receives its form. I would show you from what human tendency religion proceeds and how it belongs to what is for you the highest and dearest." In this way Schleiermacher's concept of religion was developed with an apologetic intention clearly before him. He was under conviction that religion represented a distinct aspect of human experience rooted in a universal validity and necessity.

Schleiermacher offered a revised conception of religion he believed succeeded in avoiding the offenses that had formerly caused people to neglect religion. In 1811 he criticized those who continued to display disdain for religion by saying, "It is clear that the sort of outlook which represents Christianity merely as a source of perversions and retrogressions is out-of-date." 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 11-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Brief Outline, p. 41.

#### CHAPTER V

#### SCHLEIERMACHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

The publication of Schleiermacher's book On Religion is widely acknowledged as a pivotal point which marks the beginning of a modern conception of religion. Schleiermacher is an innovator who attempted to dissociate religion from the old order while fruitfully elucidating the vital role of religion for the modern era. Due to his predilection for apologetics, he specified the essence of religion as a step prior to a reformulation of Christian dogmatics. Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion deliberately avoids the treatment of religion as dependent upon metaphysical and scientific knowledge by denying that religion is essentially speculative knowledge of divine truths. This, together with a refusal to found religion on practical moral considerations, results in an identification of religion with a feeling of God-consciousness.

### Analysis of Alternative Approaches

The predominant German currents in the philosophy of religion had been personally experienced and known by Schleiermacher in his extraordinarily broad life experiences and friendships. Showing an astute awareness of the intellectual state of affairs in Germany, he strove to overcome the disagreements between the respective champions of orthodoxy, pietism and rationalism. Observing those traditions and the attitudes of others toward them, Schleiermacher constructed a grand synthesis uniting and transcending classical orthodoxy, pietist criticism of orthodoxy, and the Enlightenment evaluation of them both. 1

## The Distinctive Nature of Religion

Religion denoted for Schleiermacher an autonomous function in human existence possessing inherently its own unique essence (<u>sui generis</u>). Ostensibly <u>On Religion</u> was directed to the Romantics, who considered themselves above religion due to their alleged achievement of new and superior cultural insights transcending both Enlightenment rationalism and dogmatic orthodoxy. Schleiermacher attempted to demonstrate to the Romantics that an adequately understood conception of religion was actually the fulfillment of their highest ideals. Some critics, however, interpreted <u>On Religion</u> as a Romantic attack upon traditional Christianity. Its pages carried repeated

<sup>1</sup> Tillich, Perspectives, pp. 11-12, 90ff; Tillich, History of Christian Thought, p. 292; Barth, Humanity of God, p. 12; Barth, Theology and Church, p. 166.

castigations of the common conceptions of religion perpetrated or sanctioned by the Church. Schleiermacher decried this tendency to cluster around extremes which represented distortions of religion. His intention was to expose inadequate conceptions of religion and modify public opinion. The stark query "What is religion?" was his point of departure.

Years later in his maturity when Schleiermacher presented his magnum opus, The Christian Faith, as a systematic formulation of Christianity, the definition of religion sui generis had not been totally superseded. The essence of religion described in On Religion in 1799 appeared in The Christian Faith of 1821 in a revised form as the prolegomenon without being radically altered. In both works Schleiermacher discussed the positive religions through which piety is manifested in historical existence. While he did not hold non-Christian religion in very high regard, he refused to express unequivocally a claim to finality for Christianity as the only true religion. 1 His analysis of the various types of religion led him to conclude that "this comparison of Christianity with other similar religions is in itself a sufficient warrant for saying that Christianity is, in fact, the most perfect of the most highly developed forms of religion."2

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 38

Schleiermacher's apologetic attention to "religion" has been the focus of recent attacks on Schleiermacher by certain twentieth century theologians. 1 Critics such as Brunner and Barth claim Schleiermacher's theology is doomed to failure because he theorized about religion in general without recognizing from the outset a qualitative superiority of Christianity over every other possible religion. These critics insist that Christianity is the only true religion, rather than simply being the best of its class. Some theologians, living in the face of prevalent thoroughgoing relativism in the twentieth century, panic at the thought of any philosophy of religion based on historically conditioned consciousness devoid of absolute claims to finality. Niebuhr, correctly noting the unfairness of such criticism of Schleiermacher's objective, says,

It would never have occurred to Schleiermacher that the category <u>religion</u> was in itself compromising of Christainity or that <u>religion</u> as a human phenomenon stands in radical contradiction to faith mediated through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher aimed to establish religion on the basis of a predisposition having its own intrinsic nature which is essential to human life. His perception of the

Doctrine of God, pp. 96-97; Barth, Theology and Church, p. 198.

 $<sup>$^{2}</sup>_{\rm Niebuhr},\,\frac{Schleiermacher}{}$  on Christ and Religion, p. 178.

cultural situation in 1799 at Berlin convinced him of the futility of reviving dead options which he believed would not be viable in the nineteenth century. Recalling the customary functions of religion, Schleiermacher wrote "that there are a Knowing and a Doing which pertain to piety, but neither of these constitutes the essence of piety."

In the second address Schleiermacher maintained that religion's essence is a tertium quid, which he designated as feeling (Gefuehl). This was precisely stated in the third proposition of The Christian Faith: "The piety which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is, considered purely in itself, neither a Knowing nor a Doing, but a modification of Feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness." In his dogmatics at this point, as well as at others, he cited correlative passages in On Religion. Among the explanations he appended to the third edition of On Religion Schleiermacher directed the reader expressly to "my 'Glaubenslehre,' the Introduction of which contains the outlines of what I take to be the philosophy of religion, and therefore has many points of contact with this book."

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 38, 41, et al.

<sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 111; cf. pp. 105-07, 117.

His explanation for the rigid tripartite classification of possibilities is that it seemed logical for him to oppose his concept to "those divergent views which are actually in existence." Schleiermacher proceeded to specify the essence of religion by eliminating certain alternatives at the outset.

## The Religion of Supernatural Truth

Schleiermacher was keenly aware of the admiration that the educated and cultured among his contemporaries entertained for new knowledge. The Enlightenment devotees, intoxicated by the potentialities of human reason for breaking the shackles of ancient custom and superstition, insisted on truth at any price. Philosophers and poets who protested the narrowly circumscribed limits of reason set by Enlightenment thinkers claimed new discoveries of the spirit surpassing in depth the knowledge of the enlightened. Philosophy, for long the handmaiden of theology, became a rival competing for speculative truths. In the popular mind theology represented truths pertaining to specific elements of cosmic reality, such as God, the soul and eternal destiny. Schleiermacher denied that religion was a particular kind of specialized knowledge, thus repudiating the claims of supernatural religion as well as so-called natural religion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 7.

In the second address of <u>On Religion</u>, Schleiermacher utilizes the familiar classification of knowledge into two kinds, the theoretical and the practical. 

Theoretical knowledge is treated in physics, or natural science, and metaphysics. Ethics is characteristic of practical knowledge.

The former describes the nature of things, or if that seems too much, how man conceives and must conceive of things and of the world as the sum of things. The latter science, on the contrary teaches what man should be for the world, and what he should do in it.<sup>2</sup>

The prevailing rational orthodoxy Schleiermacher had encountered generally interpreted religion as a body of supernatural truths. Therefore, he said, "It seems necessary to guard myself against this interpretation, especially as so many theologians seem to maintain at present that . . . the Christian religion, is the highest knowledge." Orthodox dogma was constructed speculatively from a synthesis of rational philosophy and divine revelation. Religious knowledge had been combined into intricate systems of eternal truths. Schleiermacher had an aversion to any scholastic system whose advocates considered it to be the finest expression of truth. In the first edition of On

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 27, 30, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 47, 50, 52-53, 55.

Religion Schleiermacher satirically voiced his contempt for dogmatic truth.

We have systems from all schools, yea, even from schools that are mere habitations and nurseries of the dead letter. The spirit is neither to be confined in academies nor to be poured out into a row of ready heads. It evaporates usually between the first mouth and the first ear. 1

Schleiermacher repeatedly employed the expression "dead letter" to denote verbal expositions of theologians which he contended were devoid of the essence of religion itself. Religion, he asserted, is not a system of objective knowledge, nor "a way of thinking, a faith, a peculiar way of contemplating the world, and of combining what meets us in the world." His writing manifested disdain for representatives of the confessional traditions who equated religion with intellectual assent to propositional truth. His interpretation of the function of theology meant that dogmatic formulations represented a metalanguage for religion. Schleiermacher hoped to rectify the misconception of religion viewed as "chiefly ideas, opinions, dogmas, in short, not the characteristic elements of religion, but the current reflections about them."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 16, 55, 110, 126, 150, 161, 238, 275; cf. Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, II, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 27, cf. p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 160.

In discussing the essence of religion Schleiermacher made a distinction between the inner nature as
contrasted to the outward form of religion. Theological
dogmas pertain to the outward form of religion which should
not be mistaken for religion itself. The external formulas
of dogma describe the inner experience of religion. Dogma
thereby remains second-hand, always an imperfect reflection,
which is in danger of being isolated from its source and
thus rendered lifeless. Schleiermacher construed dogmatic
theology as an empirical description of states of Godconsciousness in human experience at a particular time,
rather than as a body of eternal truths. The subjective
religious affections, stimulated especially through fellowship in religious groups, of necessity become expressed
verbally and concretely in action in history.

If the essence of religion were to be identified with knowledge, Schleiermacher claimed that this would logically suggest an inescapable corollary that the most religious or pious person would be the one who possessed the most perfect knowledge about religion. He did not expect anyone to grant that the degree of piety increases

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-15, 33; Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Christian</u> <u>Faith</u>, p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

in proportion to the level of an individual's theological talent and proficiency. Schleiermacher had witnessed in Germany the consequences of zealous and inflexible adherence to religion conceived as the truth. External coercion had been applied when religious truth was reinforced by the political powers-to-be. In Schleiermacher's own personal experience his sensitive spirit had been subjected as a teenager among the Moravians to the subtle pressure for verbal conformity as a condition for personal acceptance by the fellowship. He maintained that practices of this sort were likely to stifle religion itself. The denial of knowledge as the essence of religion was an implicit plea for tolerance.

A de-emphasis of the noetic character of religion was occasioned by Schleiermacher's desire to establish religion as a species of human self-consciousness with its own independent basis distinct from philosophy. Schleiermacher deplored the situation where the metaphysical speculations of philosophy were considered synonymous with religion. Philosophy aimed to describe or explain the nature of reality in a cognitive fashion by means of deductions and logical systems. During the later years of Schleiermacher's life Hegel, his colleague at the University of Berlin, interpreted religion philosophically in conceptual and rational terms in a most thorough-going

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

way. One of the serious deficiencies of philosophers, according to Schleiermacher, was their neglect of the vital role of the senses. He lamented, "With pain I see daily how the rage for calculating and explaining suppresses the sense."

This passion for logical analysis and explanation reduced human perception at the same time that its advocates advanced pure reason as a guarantor of truth.

Schleiermacher concurred with the Romantics in their protest against such a restriction of human experience as the Enlightenment represented. Schleiermacher suspected that contempt for religion manifested by its cultured despisers was rooted in a new barbarism of the mind, which limited meaningful significance to the lowest common denominator of logical objectivity.

Denying that the center of the religious response is primarily noetic he leveled his protest against the common error of both scholastic orthodoxy and Enlightenment Deism. Despite their wide divergence both groups confuse the acceptance of certain metaphysical beliefs with the living center of personal religious faith.<sup>3</sup>

A perspective common among eighteenth century thinkers who rejected supernatural religion was known as natural religion. Natural religion signified belief in a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 124; cf. p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 11, 15, 20, 131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>John Wallhausser, Jr., "Schleiermacher's Early Development As Ethical Thinker" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1965), p. 151.

bare minimum of speculative concepts in harmony with the mechanistic Weltanschauung of science and philosophy at the time. The contents of natural theology were alleged to be universally discoverable by reason alone. This was accomplished by a reductionism of theology through the removal of any doctrines offensive to their rational sense. The exponents of natural theology claimed that their principles were self-evident truths established independently from the particularism of any supernatural revelation. In effect, natural religion represented an intellectual abstraction from life of certain noetic affirmations.

Schleiermacher considered the human capacity for religion to be innate. This sense for the divine was grounded in human nature, but religion needed to be cultivated like any other inherited endowment. Schleiermacher charged that this inborn religious instinct was being suppressed by the philosophical interests of natural religion. Natural religion was a denial of unique religious experiences of the kind Schleiermacher esteemed and commended to his readers. According to his convictions religion originates in concrete experiences which are particular and historical rather than abstract and general. He held that due to its indeterminacy natural religion is

<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 115, 124, 131, 190; cf. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 22, 26ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 124-25, 131-32.

a conception that can never be religion. Religion in general, for him, was a fiction that had no more possibility of being actualized than the possibility of anyone's being born as man in general rather than as one particular person. Schleiermacher cited English and French natural religion as clear cases of this misconceived religion of externals which could not be regarded as religion at all. The natural religion of deism was portrayed as a jumble of bits and pieces from metaphysics and ethics deserving the reproach and despisal of the cultured.

Schleiermacher's diversified experiences before 1800 convinced him that the disconcerting erosions of Christianity by the Neologians and attacks from the skeptics were symptomatic of more far-reaching crises yet to come for religion. In the words of an early twentieth century commentator, "The course of philosophical speculation on one hand, and the rapid emergence of the physical sciences on the other, were making great inroads on the position of those who attempted to retain any religious Weltanschauung."

lbid., pp. 233-34, cf. p. 155; Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 30, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 14, 31, 214, 232.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>William Boothby Selbie, <u>Schleiermacher</u>, <u>a Critical</u> <u>and Historical</u> <u>Study</u> (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), <u>p. 237</u>.



Schleiermacher proposed an innovative philosophy of religion perceived as a break with an untenable orthodox tradition and prepared with the intention of achieving a new conception of religion which would be acceptable and beneficial to modern culture in the long run. Perhaps Schleiermacher had some premonition of the divisive controversies that raged openly between the religious and scientific communities later in the century.

Schleiermacher precluded the conflict between religion and natural science by means of a Kantian epistemology wherein possible objects of scientific study are confined to phenomenal entities. The scientist with an appropriate methodology analyzes and describes relations perceived between such finite objects. The nature of God, or the Infinite in itself, can never become a legitimate object of scientific knowledge. Since Schleiermacher denied that religion was a system of knowledge, he did not anticipate that science would pose any threat to religion. Schleiermacher's conception of religion as intuitions of the Infinite in the finite suggested to him a parallel relation between natural science and religion rather than one of mutual exclusion. Schleiermacher had a positive regard for nature and science. A miracle did not represent an anti-scientific proof of faith because Schleiermacher believed "Miracle is simply the religious name for event. Every event, even the most natural and usual, becomes a miracle, as soon as the religious view of it can be the

dominant." Religion, then, does not originate as a knowledge of either the world or  $\operatorname{God}$ .

# Kant and the Religion of Morality

Kant was the most important thinker to Schleiermacher in his early philosophical study. The early works
of Kant were published for the first time during Schleiermacher's youth. Almost immediately Kant's philosophy
became the subject of vigorous controversy in the late
eighteenth century among intellectuals in Prussia. In his
coherent system Kant articulated some ideas typical of
certain Enlightenment viewpoints which were critical of
traditional philosophy and theology. Schleiermacher wholeheartedly agreed with Kant's repudiation of the rationalism
of the Wolffian system which was in voque at that time.

The main thrust of Kant's <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u> imposed a limit on theoretical knowledge by specifying its necessary presuppositions. Anything not appearing as phenomena through the pure forms of intuition (time and space) Kant excluded from ever becoming an object of knowledge. The existence of an extramundane God, therefore, could never be rationally demonstrated by means of the classical proofs since, in Kant's opinion, "It is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>On Religion</u>, p. 88, cf. pp. 89, 113-14; Christian Faith, <u>pp. 71-73</u>, 178-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 35-36.

impossible by means of metaphysics to progress from knowledge of this world to concepts of God and a proof of his existence through cogent inferences." Schleiermacher held that rational proofs of divine existence are superfluous as well as invalid. He condemned the illicit intrusion of such proofs into dogmatic theology. He maintained that no value, either practical or speculative, accrues from proofs of divine reality. In harmony with Kant's position Schleiermacher asserted,

But just as it could only injure science to employ expressions belonging to the religious consciousness or to mingle with science anything belonging to that sphere, so it can only be harmful to faith and the system of doctrine to intersperse them with scientific propositions or to make them dependent on scientific foundations.<sup>3</sup>

Schleiermacher's rejection of rational deductions in establishing religion, however, made no exception of Kant's treatment of religion. Six years before Schleiermacher wrote On Religion, Kant's book, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, was published. At that time Schleiermacher and his father in their correspondence commented on the wide range of divergent responses to Kant's treatise on religion. Six years before Schleiermacher and his father in their correspondence

<sup>1</sup>Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 135-37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 126-28.

work as a conclusive philosophical argument in favor of Christianity in contradiction to other reviewers who viewed it as a perilous portrayal of religion.

Religion, in Kant's philosophical system, is elaborated as an extension of his ethics of practical reason. The goal of Kantian ethics is obedience to the moral law from duty. The possibility of fulfilling the moral law is assumed in order to assure the significance of freedom and obligation in morality. In other words. it would make no sense to say "I ought to obey the moral law" without simultaneously affirming "I can obey the moral law." Another basic principle of Kant's ethics is that a life of virtue in harmony with the moral law will eventually be accompanied by happiness. The worthiness to be happy is dependent on virtue since Kant assumes "virtue and happiness together constitute the possession of the highest good for one person, and happiness in exact proportion to morality." This common-sense assumption is rejected by Schleiermacher as lacking the rational necessity claimed for it by Kant.

The role of religion in Kant's practical philosophy is to sanction and support rational morality. In Kant's words, religion "must consist not in dogmas and rites but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kant, <u>Critique</u> of <u>Practical</u> <u>Reason</u>, pp. 38, 118, 123, 129, 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 115, cf. p. 129.

in the heart's disposition to fulfill all human duties as divine commands" and "the performance of all human duties as divine commands . . . constitutes the essence of all religion." From this standpoint Kant explained all religious beliefs and practices in terms of their specifically moral value, and every aspect of religion that he retained remains contingent upon its moral utility.

In order to account for the disparity between perfect obedience to the moral law and actual human achievement Kant introduced the concept of "radical evil." 
Radical evil, analogous to the Christian doctrine of original sin, is the natural predisposition which frustrates perfect obedience to the moral law. Kant postulated immortality to vindicate his previous claims that virtue produces a corresponding happiness and man has the capacity to fulfill his moral obligation. He believed that every religion affirms a belief in a future life. The Kantian postulate of immortality provides an infinite span of time for the culmination of moral perfection in rational man beyond the finite limits of this imperfect earthly life. Kant's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kant, Religion within the Limits, p. 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 100, cf. p. 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 15ff. <sup>4</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 125-26; Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 126-28.

moral argument purports to justify God's existence as the supreme lawgiver who has the power to insure the moral certainty of the universe. 1

Schleiermacher did not believe Kant's rational demonstration of the postulates hypothesizing God and immortality were valid. In spite of Kant's insistence that they do not have a speculative use in theoretical reason, 2 Schleiermacher regarded Kant's treatment of religion as an abrogation of the strictures in the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant had transformed his agnosticism regarding certain non-contradictory problematic ideas into definite convictions with practical utility. This suggests, Schleiermacher contended, that Kant had transgressed his own restriction against moving from a regulative to a constitutive use of reason in the absence of sensible intuitions. 3 In the Critique of Practical Reason the postulates are rationally established as subjectively practical assumptions which admittedly lack the objective necessity to be knowledge, yet they have ceased to be merely thinkable possibilities. The postulates (i.e., freedom, God, immortality) used to substantiate moral virtue are

<sup>1</sup>Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, pp. 128-36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 137ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Kant, <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, p. 449ff., 517-18, 532ff.

remarkably similar to the minimum beliefs of deism that are criticized by Schleiermacher for their noetic import.

Schleiermacher directed sharp criticism against Enlightenment utilitarian religion which identified the function of religion with moral activity. Since it was Schleiermacher's conviction that religion, properly conceived, represents an independent and essential experience in human self-consciousness, he resented any patronizing acknowledgment of religion as beneficial to moral action. He felt this attitude contributed to contempt for religion itself. Addressing the scoffers he said, "Do not declare to the disgrace of mankind that your loftiest creation is but a parasitic plant that can only nourish itself from strange sap." What is loved and honoured only on account of some extraneous advantage may be needful, but is not itself necessary. . . . To recommend it merely as an accessorv is too unimportant." Whosoever would proclaim religion must do it unadulterated." Those who failed to appreciate the unique role of religion because of their disproportionate emphasis on ethical ideas myopically focused on the mere externals, "being occupied in the outer court of morality," Schleiermacher thought. Schleiermacher met many in his day, even among the defenders of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 173. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.



Christianity, who extolled the side-effects of religion. He challenged them to search beyond the superficial and obvious. Lamenting the popular misconception of religion he exclaimed.

How have you come to this torn off fragment? I will tell you. You do not regard it as religion but as an echo of moral action, and you simply wish to foist the name upon it, in order to give religion the last blow. What we have agreed to acknowledge as religion does not arise exclusively in the moral sphere.1

Schleiermacher made direct reference to the pragmatic resort to religion by people who insist "how necessary religion is for maintaining justice and order in the world."<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher was uneasy about the expectation that the Church ought to teach morality for the benefit of the State.<sup>3</sup> Throughout his life he championed the separation of Church and State to protect the freedom and integrity of the Church. He even suggested that perversions of religion are partially occasioned by "those who have dragged forth religion from the depths of the heart into the civil world."<sup>4</sup>

A stress on the ethical aspect of religion commonly included implicitly some form of a doctrine of retribution. Schleiermacher criticized those who extraneously attached

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 173, 204, cf. p. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 216; cf. p. 167.

happiness, either in this life or the next, to the summum bonum of ethics. Schleiermacher did not envision religion's essential function as merely to provide the hopeful anticipation of moral recompense through a divine Nemesis that those who, being predominantly ethical or rather legal, would, by selecting from religion only the elements suited to this purpose, making of it an insignificant appendage to morals. Schleiermacher did not intend to isolate religion from other sciences even though he believed religion represented experiences sui generis. A moral dimension of religious experiences was not denied by Schleiermacher. He explained,

Piety and morality can be considered apart, and so far they are different. As I have already admitted and asserted, the one is based on feeling, the other on action. . . but piety and morality form each a series by itself and are two different functions of one and the same life. 3

In other words, religion and ethics are different, but complementary.

### The Feeling of God-Consciousness

Schleiermacher intended to delineate religion as a distinct and independent dimension of human self-consciousness. Religion, he contended, possesses an indispensable and valid role in life with its own unique

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 20, 116-17. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 57, 59; cf. pp. 28-29, 113.

essence. Repeatedly Schleiermacher differentiated religion's essence from the functions of speculative sciences and ethics. He expressed his conception concisely in these words:

Religion neither seeks like metaphysics to determine and explain the nature of the Universe, nor like morals to advance and perfect the Universe by the power of freedom and the divine will of man. It is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling. 1

Intuition and feeling (<u>Anschauung und Gefuehl</u>) signify the basic experiential quality of religion. Schleiermacher believed that "to the man who has not experienced it himself" religion can never be grasped nor appreciated. Anyone who observes the outward manifestations of religion, consequently, cannot understand religion unless he has already experienced religious feeling himself.

## The Subjective Aspect of Religious Feelings

Schleiermacher's apprehension of religious feeling developed during the impressionable years of his youth among the Moravians. The foundation of Moravian piety was supernatural feeling. The atmosphere of daily life in the Moravian communities was infused with feelings of reverence and piety. Speaking autobiographically, Schleiermacher acknowledged, "Piety was the mother's womb, in whose sacred

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 277, cf. pp. 37-38. Schleiermacher, Ueber die Religion, pp. 49ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 9, cf. p. 16.

darkness my young life was nourished and was prepared for a world still sealed for it. In it my spirit breathed ere it had yet found its own place in knowledge and experience." Moravian devotion cultivated the feeling of oneness with the divine. The sacred events of the life of Jesus were frequently recounted in graphic and dramatic terms calculated to stimulate pious feelings. Lively and vivid feelings of communion with Jesus, the saving Redeemer, were considered normative by the Brethren.

Schleiermacher was impressed immediately by the moving devotion of Moravian worship which he observed at Gnadenfrei in 1783. Imaginative descriptions of inner feelings derived from union with the Savior were depicted in sermon and hymnody. Schleiermacher did not doubt the reality of those existential feelings that the Moravians shared through empirical testimony of their personal experiences. In spite of his sincere and joyful participation in a Moravian congregation, after a period of time Schleiermacher suffered difficulty in sustaining the specific religious feelings integral to Moravian piety. Schleiermacher related this dilemma in his autobiography by saying, "in vain I aspired after those supernatural experiences, . . . the reality of which, externally to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 9. <sup>2</sup>Nelson, p. 556.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 486, 557.

myself, every lesson and every hymn, yes, every glance at the Brethren, so attractive while under their influence, persuaded me." The stumbling-block to his achievement of supernatural feelings was the literal, orthodox Christology which was inseparable from those pious feelings. reminded him of the trauma of the sleepless nights he had endured anxiously puzzling over the doctrines of original sin and atonement when he was only eleven years of age. While Schleiermacher did not remain uncritical of Moravian piety, he acknowledged his debt to the paramount emphasis of pietism on subjective religious feelings. 2 He affirmed the validity and centrality of "feeling" in religion as a result of his association with the Moravians. In correspondence written in 1805, nearly twenty years after his departure from Barby, he reported, "On Wednesday next I contemplate going to Barby, to visit the Herrnhut school, where I spent three of the best years of my youth, during which my love of knowledge and my religious feelings first developed themselves."3

Schleiermacher defined religion as the consciousness of God apprehended through feeling. The religious experience is likewise one of immediate awareness. In On Religion

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, Autobiography and Letters, I, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 145, 183, 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, II, 21, cf. 22-24.

the words "feeling," "intuition," and "consciousness" are often modified by "immediate" (unmittelbaren). 1 Thus, piety is an experience wherein "only what . . . is feeling and immediate consciousness, can belong to religion. . . . the true nature of religion is . . . immediate consciousness of the Deity as He is found in ourselves and in the world."2 The presupposition of religious perception specified in his dogmatics is "the immediate feeling of absolute dependence."3 This stress on the immediacy of religious intuition by Schleiermacher is held in common with Gefuehlsphilosophie. 4 Jacobi, for example, assumed that knowledge of supersensible reality was actualized through direct intuition which he termed faith. 5 Schleiermacher was sympathetic to the refusal of Gefuehlsphilosophie to separate rationality from sensuous experience. Religious intuition through immediate experience involves a unity of reason and sense, according to Schleiermacher. In The Christian Faith Schleiermacher carefully explained that "immediate self-consciousness" must not be confused with reflective contemplation. 6

<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 16, 36, 70, 90,
93, 94, 99, 101, 217, 228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 93, 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 131; cf. p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Wilde, p. 75. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 59, 62-63, 66-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 6-7.

Immediate self-consciousness in religion is, therefore, a specific type of feeling. Feeling, thus understood, is disparate from a series of logical inferences or deductions and any system of mediate ideas. The reception of immediate feelings and intuitions is the <u>sine qua non</u> of religion in Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion.

Schleiermacher does not isolate feeling as one faculty of perception unrelated to other functions of the "Religion, as the sum of all higher feelings" is self. an experience of the total personality. It was Schleiermacher's conviction that such a holistic conception of man represents truly the actual experience of human life at its This is in contrast to any versions of a faculty psychology assumed by some thinkers in that period. Other forms of self-consciousness, according to Schleiermacher, are derived from the basis of religious self-consciousness. Pious feelings of the undivided self do not originate from some delimited emotional stimulus "by any one faculty, but by our whole being. The divine in us, therefore, is immediately affected and called forth by the feeling . . . this immediate and original existence of God in us through feeling." For several generations Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion has been subjected to gross misrepresentations of his conception of feeling. From Hegel

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 93-94, cf. p. 115.

onward his principle of religious feeling has been caricatured as a non-rational animal instinct or parodied as mere emotion and unrestrained sentimentality. Other popularized portravals have endeavored sympathetically to adopt Schleiermacher's authority in order to psychologize religious practice or zealously encourage ecstatic, emotional subjectivity in religion. Schleiermacher's viewpoint has greater affinity to traditional Christian reverence than it is characteristic of the excited enthusiasm of contemporary pietistic sects. The widespread failure to understand Schleiermacher in his own terms has on one hand resulted in a condemnation of his position because of an alleged resemblance to abhorrent contemporary expressions, while, on the other hand. Schleiermacher's terms have been appropriated uncritically to support guite different views. Tillich properly noted, "It was a misunderstanding of Schleiermacher's definition of religion . . . and a symptom of religious weakness when successors of Schleiermacher located religion in the realm of feeling as one psychological function among others."1

One serious deficiency that Schleiermacher perceived in Kant's philosophy of religion lay in the role of feeling. Kant interpreted moral feeling "as the subjective

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Tillich, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, I, 15, cf. 41-42, 153; cf. Redeker, <u>Finleitung in Schleiermacher</u>, <u>Der</u> christliche Glaube, I, xxxi-xxxii.

effect which the law has upon the will to which reason alone gives objective grounds."

He refused to assign any reliable function to feeling in religion.

Schleiermacher contended that this neglect of feelings made Kant's practical philosophy inadequate due to a too narrowly conceived apprehension of human nature. Schleiermacher believed that an adequate treatment of religion would be precluded if attempted on the foundation of Kant's rational morality.

## The Objective Source of Religious Feelings

The subjective experience of religious feelings is traced to an objective origin. Religious feelings, far from being self-induced, are the effect of something on us according to Schleiermacher's assumption. The immediate self-consciousness of feeling absolutely dependent has an objective basis which Schleiermacher specified as "the Whence of our receptive and active existence." A Romanticism influenced Schleiermacher's manner of expressing the objective source of religion.

Schleiermacher has been identified with Romanticism through his ideas as well as his friendships. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Kant, Religion within the Limits, pp. 104-05.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 84-85, 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 16.



significance of these associations to Schleiermacher's thought was recognized and analyzed in detail in the nine-teenth century by Dilthey and Haym. Writers still allude to Schleiermacher as the theologian of Romanticism. Schleiermacher's On Religion, as well as the Monologen, Confidential Letters Concerning Lucinde, and Christmas Eve, exhibit the discernible influence of that cultural milieu on his expression. At the time On Religion was composed his closest friends were members of the Romantic literary circle in Berlin. He framed the ideas in On Religion in terms calculated to communicate his message effectively to the Romantics. He did not, however, completely adopt the Romantic style and interests nor remain captivated by Romanticism.

Romanticism exalted an aesthetic type of feeling stimulating an acute awareness for the broad spectrum of impressions experienced through every sense. The unity and origin of all finite impressions is the Universe (Universum) or the Infinite (Unendlich). The Romantics celebrated their appreciation for the Universe through aesthetic intuitions of finite realities in the world. The Romantic

lRandall, pp. 239-44, 345-50; H. G. Schenk, The Mind of the European Romantics, An Essay in Cultural History, Anchor Books (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Company, Inc., 1969), "Emotional Christianity," pp. 110-16; Selbie, Schleiermacher, pp. 4-6, 19-23; Matthew Spinka, Christian Thought from Erasmus to Berdyaev (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), "F. D. E. Schleiermacher, the Theological Exponent of Romanticism," pp. 99-112.



imagination was based on an openness or receptivity to the ground of experience in the Infinite.

The principle of the relation between the finite and the infinite is the first principle of Romanticism on which everything else is dependent. Without it Romanticism and a theologian like Schleiermacher become completely unintelligible.

The Romantic appeal to experience became synthesized with Schleiermacher's previous encounter with the prominence of feelings in Moravian piety and <a href="Moravian-Philosophie">Gefuehls-Philosophie</a>. Schleiermacher's concept of the Infinite is not equated with Nature nor limited to the totality of finite things. An awareness of the "whence" (<a href="Woher">Woher</a>) of religious feeling is, however, related to finite impressions impinging upon the self-consciousness. Schleiermacher elucidated this by saving,

Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you. . . The religious man must, at least, be conscious of his feelings as the immediate product of the Universe.<sup>2</sup>

Schleiermacher and the Spinoza Controversy.-Schleiermacher's inclination in On Religion to speak of
God as the Infinite and his reluctance to characterize God
unambiguously in personal terms incurred the immediate
accusation that his philosophy of religion was Spinozistic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Tillich, Perspectives, p. 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On pp. 48, 58, 86, 93-94, 173. Religion, pp. 45, 90; cf.



The German Romantic writers with whom he associated were among the <u>avant-garde</u> who resurrected Spinoza's philosophy in the late eighteenth century. Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) suffered reproach by the Amsterdam Jewish community in being excommunicated from the synagogue in his youth, and in being condemned repeatedly by Christian theologians later in his life and even after his death. The sixth definition of Spinoza's <u>Ethics</u> posits God as infinite Being, the only substance of the entire universe. Spinoza's term <u>natura</u> <u>naturans</u> designated Being in itself, the infinite attributes of which are modified to produce necessarily <u>natura</u> <u>naturata</u>, or all the particular existing things. Spinoza's philosophy was the object of contempt for a century primarily due to its offensiveness to theology.

The most common source of information regarding
Spinoza during the eighteenth century was the 1697

Dictionnaire historique et critique of Pierre Bayle
(1647-1706).

Bayle's article on Spinoza was a combination of truth and half-truth, gossip and innuendo. It begins with the report that Spinoza, the atheist from

Amsterdam, "was a systematic atheist who employed a

lburkhardt, "Introduction" in Herder, God, p. 14; Chadwick, "Introduction" in Lessing, Lessing's Theological Writings, p. 46; Frederick Pollock, Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy (London: Duckworth and Company, 1899), p. 361; Sime, Lessing, pp. 296-97.

totally new method." The charge of atheism imputed to Spinoza is repeated on nearly every page. Bayle was encouraged to note that among Spinoza's small number of followers only a few had studied his philosophy, and most of these did not understand it. Spinoza's ideas which had been presented by him more geometrico with a claim for impeccable logic and certainty appeared to Bayle as "monstrous absurdities" hardly worth examination since "of all the hypotheses of atheism, Spinoza's is the least capable of misleading anybody; for, as I have already said, it opposes the most distinct notions in the human mind."3 Bayle's evaluation of Spinoza was accepted generally by European thinkers including the German philosopher Christian Wolff in his Theologia naturalis of 1737. Since Spinoza was widely maligned in the eighteenth century, the epithet "Spinozist" was an invective to be assiduously avoided by every self-respecting thinker.

The visit of Jacobi to Lessing at Wolfenbuettel on July 5, 1780 was the occasion for a lengthy correspondence between Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn in 1785 which became a public controversy over Spinoza's philosophy. Among the

Pierre Bayle, <u>Historical</u> and <u>Critical Dictionary</u>
<u>Selections</u>, trans. by <u>Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company</u>, 1965), p. 288.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 308. <sup>3</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 301.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>A collection of the important documents of the German Spinoza controversy is included in Heinrich Scholz,



things which Jacobi provided for Lessing to examine was a fragment from the closing section of Goethe's <u>Prometheus</u> which had not yet been published at that time. To Jacobi's astonishment, Lessing recognized the influence of Spinoza in Goethe and confessed,

The point of view from which the poem is taken, that is my own viewpoint. The orthodox concepts of the deity are no longer for me; I can not use them. One and all! I know nothing else. This poem also follows this; and I must admit I like it very much.

An interruption cut the conversation short, but Lessing reintroduced the subject of Spinoza the next morning, during which conversation he flatly declared, "There is no other philosophy than the philosophy of Spinoza." Jacobi, though conceding that Spinoza's philosophy was logical when compared to other rational philosophies, found Spinoza unacceptable. Jacobi vehemently insisted in all he wrote on this subject that Spinoza's philosophy is a paradigm of atheism and fatalism, and is, thereby, repugnant to Christianity. The expositions of Spinoza written by Jacobi were shaped by this bias of his outlook wherein

ed., Die Hauptschriften zum Pantheismusstreit zwischen Jacobi und Mendelssohn, Neudrucke seltener philosophischer Werke Herausgegeben von der Kantsgesellschaft, Band VI (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1916).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Werke, Band IV, Abt. 1, "Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn" (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer, 1819), p. 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

. . . he regards not simply Spinozism, but all demonstrative philosophy, as atheistic and fatalistic; that in fact, according to him, every kind of demonstration results in fatalism and atheism; and that religion can exist only where faith takes the place of reason. 1

Moses Mendelssohn, who was in the process of preparing a book on Lessing, became appalled by the impropriety of Jacobi's advancing such scandalous libel against Lessing's character and making it public four years after the death of Lessing. Mendelssohn felt constrained to defend Lessing's reputation. Mendelssohn refused to believe that Lessing had wholeheartedly embraced Spinozism, and further criticized Jacobi's misconstrued elaboration of Spinoza's philosophy, even though Mendelssohn himself found the Spinozistic philosophy unsatisfactory. This controversy attracted the attention of most German intellectuals, many of whom offered their critique whether or not they had studied the primary sources.

The revival of interest in Spinoza, as previously noted, affected Goethe, who assimilated some of Spinoza's ideas in his poetry. The Romantic poet Novalis enthusiastically proclaimed Spinoza as the "God-intoxicated man"

Arthur Cushman McGiffert, "The God of Spinoza as Interpreted by Herder," <u>Hibbert Journal</u>, III (1904-5), 709.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Cf. Hans Hoelters, <u>Der spinozistische Gottesbegriff</u> bei M. <u>Mendelssohn und F. H. Jacobi und der Gottesbegriff</u> <u>Spinozas</u> (Emsdetten: Verlags-Anstalt Heinr. & J. Lechte, 1938).



and Spinozism as "supersaturation with the deity." The first important work of that era to defend Spinoza's philosophy was Herder's <u>Gott</u> which appeared in 1787. Herder's dialogue opens with a discussion of the regrettable preconceptions of Spinoza which are traceable to Bayle. A modified form of Spinozism received acceptance by means of Herder's interpretation that Spinoza was not an atheist, but a monistic theorist of the immanence of God.

Schleiermacher became aware of the Spinoza controversy while he was at Barby. Several months later in a letter to his father from Halle on August 14, 1787 he confessed his perplexity with Jacobi's philosophy and expressed an intention to reread the Jacobi-Mendelssohn correspondence. This study aroused his continuing interest in Spinoza.

Like most Germans at that time, he had acquired his first particular knowledge of Spinoza in the outline which Jacobi had presented in his 1785 Briefen ueber die Lehre des Spinoza; since he did not possess this book, he copied for his own purpose the forty-four propositions in which Jacobi summarized the doctrines of Spinoza.<sup>4</sup>

Quoted in Haym, p. 359.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Herder, pp. 76-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Autobiography</u> and <u>Letters</u>, I, 69.

Hermann Mulert, "Schleiermacher Ueber Spinoza und Jacobi," Chronicon Spinozanum, III (1923), 295.



Jacobi's forty-four propositions provided the basis for two related essays on Spinoza that Schleiermacher wrote. The first Spinoza essay, "Brief Description of the Spinozistic System," was prepared either in late 1793 or early 1794 at the beginning of his residency at Landsberg, according to Dilthey. Though not intended for publication, it was published posthumously as an appendix to his "History of Philosophy."

Schleiermacher's judgment, derived from Jacobi's commentary and brief quotations from Spinoza contained therein, was that Jacobi had misinterpreted Spinoza.

Schleiermacher perceived a similarity between Spinoza and Kant. He attempted to harmonize the two philosophies since both distinguished between existence per se and existence per aliud. Kant's noumena, according to Schleiermacher's analysis, is analogous to Spinoza's infinite substance. He made this parallel:

The material world is purely a product of the world of intellect and of man, and the world of noumena is directly in this way the cause of the material world, just as Spinoza's infinite thing is the cause of the finite things. . . According to Spinoza the infinite thing itself is related to the finite, just as according to Kant the noumena is related to phenomena, in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Jacobi, pp. 172-205.

Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers I, 148, "Denkmale," pp. 64-65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, "Kurze Darstellung des Spinozistischen Systems," <u>Saemmtliche Werke</u>, III. <u>Philosophie</u>: Band 1, Abt. 1 (1839), pp. 283-311.



that case Spinoza must have discovered the Kantian philosophy before Kant.1

Schleiermacher composed a second Spinoza essay,
"Spinozismus," before leaving Landsberg in 1796. The only
publication of this manuscript appeared in 1923 in an
abridged version edited by Mulert. This is essentially a
commentary on Jacobi's texts. In this essay Schleiermacher
stated what he considered to be the epitome of Jacobi's
forty-four propositions.

One can bring all of them that appear in this outline under three main points: 1. The doctrine of the infinite thing in itself, 2. the doctrine of the relationship of finite things to the infinite, 3. the doctrine of the relationship of extension to thought in the finite things.<sup>4</sup>

Sometime between 1796 and 1799, prior to the composition of On Religion, Schleiermacher read Spinoza's Ethic first-hand for the first time. 5

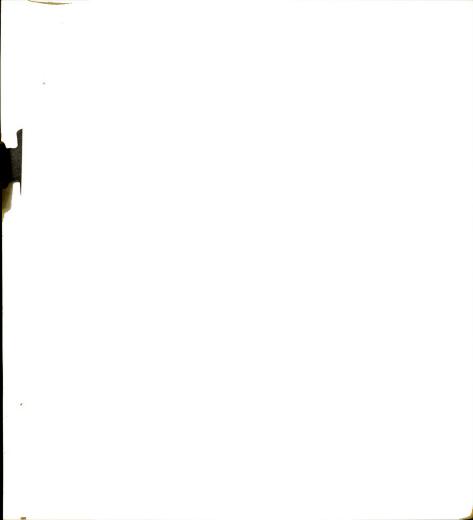
The criticism directed against On Religion most frequently by religious leaders accused Schleiermacher of Spinozism. Among the citations Schleiermacher made to Spinoza in On Religion, one overt reference is especially

<sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, "Kurze Darstellung des Spinozistischen Systems," pp. 294, 298. Cf. Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers I, p. 149; Haym, pp. 410-12; 425; Mulert, pp. 299-300.

Dilthey, <u>Leben Schleiermachers</u> <u>I</u>, "Denkmale," pp. 65-69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Mulert, pp. 296-311. <sup>4</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Dilthey, <u>Leben</u> <u>Schleiermachers</u> <u>I</u>, pp. 319-20.



salient. In that place Schleiermacher bids the reader to honor the memory of Spinoza.

With me offer reverentially a lock of hair to the holy, despised Spinoza! The high World-Spirit permeated him; the Infinite was his beginning and end, the Universe his sole and perpetual love. . . . He was full of religion and full of the holy Spirit. 1

Variations of the pantheistic formula, "the one in the All," occurring in several places in <u>On Religion</u> contributed to the enormity of the intimations of Spinozism.<sup>2</sup> Schleier-macher denied the charge of materialistic pantheism.<sup>3</sup> As far as he was concerned, the term "pantheism" functions as a pejorative taunt that had been devised to harass one's theological opponents.<sup>4</sup>

Even though Schleiermacher thought that it was erroneous to regard Spinoza as a villain, he later insisted that he was not a Spinozist. Schleiermacher directed his detractors to the fact that he had never defended the Spinozistic system nor implied that Spinoza possessed Christian piety. Schleiermacher attempted to defend

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Ueber die Religion</u>, p. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>On</u> <u>Religion</u>, pp. 7, 45, 101, 104, 137, 142, 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 97. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 38-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 104-05.



himself against the false impressions the ecclesiastical authorities, such as Sack, had received from his writing. In a recent book Gerhard Spiegler summarized Schleiermacher's predicament.

Schleiermacher rejected the idea that his Speeches were an apology for pantheism, or a means by which he wanted to propagate Spinoza's system. He protested Sack's impugning of his personal integrity while rejecting the idea that religion is necessarily connected with the "metaphysical concept of God's personhood."1

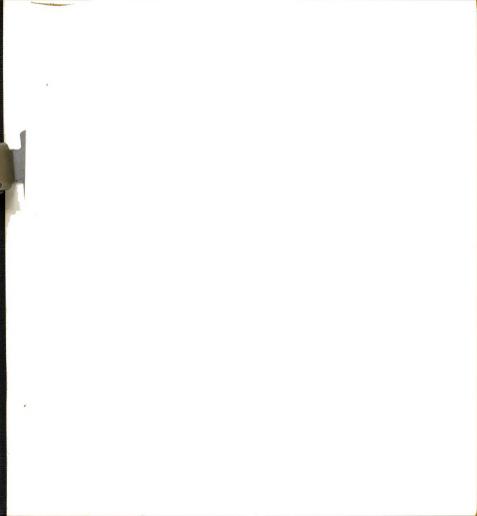
Schleiermacher's concern was to avoid a decidedly anthropomorphic conception of God, rather than promote either pantheism or Spinoza. Through a less personal image of God, he believed he might be instrumental in reaching the despisers of religion and, simultaneously, "will not make the idea of the personality of God more uncertain for anyone who truly has it." Schleiermacher indicated his intention to develop a more inclusive concept of God without denying any special significance to the description of piety traditionally held by Christians. Schleiermacher employed several impersonal terms in expressing man's relationship to God: Highest Being, the Infinite, the Universe, the World-Spirit. The appellation "World-Spirit," for example,

lgerhard Spiegler, The Eternal Covenant, Schleier-macher's Experiment in Cultural Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 20. cf. Selbie, pp. 6, 23-24, 241-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 95-98, 115-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 98. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 111, 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 49, 70, 81, 84, 111, 135, 211.



can be viewed as the focal-point of religious experience whereby "the aim of all religion is to love the World-Spirit and joyfully to regard his working."

The Principle of Individuality .-- Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion and its terminology reveal his indebtedness to the thought-forms of his age. Religion signified for him intuition and feeling of the Infinite. The relationship between the Infinite and the finite was the object of Schleiermacher's intense preoccupation in his Spinoza essays. In On Religion Schleiermacher elaborated this relationship in terms of a correlation between the Universe and individuality (principium individui). Religion is the perception and perspectivity which an individual has for the Universe. In piety the individual, by means of his innate receptivity, is self-conscious of his dependence upon the Infinite. The openness of the total individual self in religion he vividly termed "instinct for the Universe," or "sense for the Universe." The individual's relationship to God is one which transcends rationality. In Schleiermacher's words "religion is sense and taste for the Infinite."4 (Religion ist Sinn und Geschmack fuers Unendliche.)5

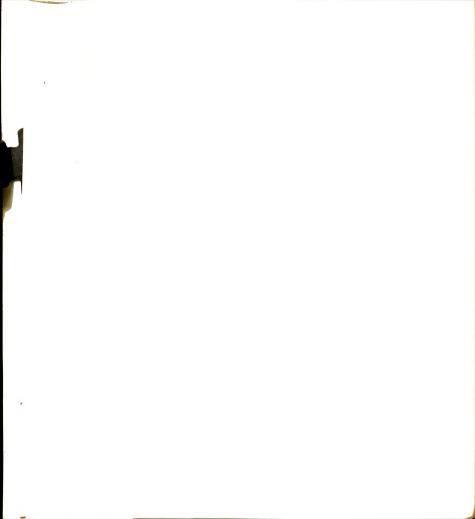
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 123, 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 39, 103, 278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Schleiermacher, Ueber die Religion, p. 51.

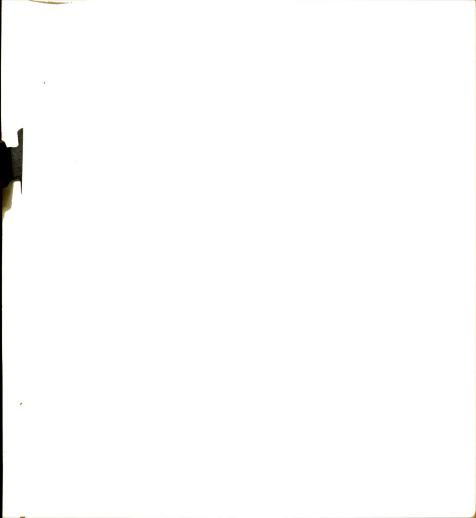


The theory of individuality appearing in On Religion is rooted in Schleiermacher's Spinoza study. 1 It must be remembered, furthermore, that individuality was an important element in the Weltanschauung of Herder, Jacobi and the German Romantics. In the Monologen Schleiermacher communicated his discovery "that each man is meant to represent humanity in his own way, combining its elements uniquely, so that it may reveal itself in every mode." Humanity manifests itself concretely through an infinite variety of unique concurrences of spirit and matter where "the individual is only one form of humanity." The individual always remains limited, or dependent, inasmuch as the finite inheres in the Infinite. 4 According to Schleiermacher's philosophy, the Infinite in itself can never be directly known or experienced as a whole. The Infinite is related to man's experience only through the finite. Unassuming finite experiences constitute sacramental possibilities in which an individual's higher self-consciousness is cultivated. In contrast to rationalism, the sensory

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Schleiermacher, <u>Soliloquies</u>, p. 31.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Schleiermacher, On Religion, p. 82; cf. pp. 4, 75-76, 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 70.



intuitions of finite life are not depreciated by Schleier-macher. He says, "Never forget that the fundamental intuition of a religion must be some intuition of the Infinite in the finite. . . . From all finite things we should see the Infinite." Schleiermacher's doctrine of the immanence of God in the finite world is similar to Herder's reinter-pretation of Spinoza's monism.

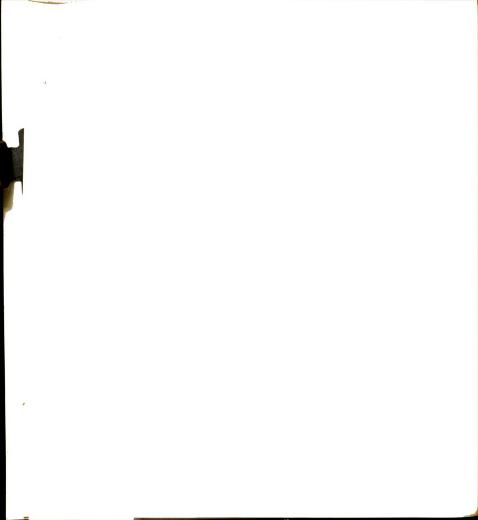
Schleiermacher's final address in On Religion relates to the emergence of specific religions. A concrete form of religion is based on a fundamental intuition (Grundanschauung) of the Infinite in the finite. Since there is an infinitude of possible intuitions, Schleiermacher considered it illogical for anyone to expect there to be only one true religion. Christianity, for example, originates from a consciousness of redemption in Jesus of Nazareth. All Christians experience God-consciousness through Jesus in some way. This experience is described in the personal and corporate witness articulated by the Church.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Ibid</u>., pp. 237, 245; cf. p. 88.

<sup>2&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 228, 238. Schleiermacher, <u>Christian</u>
<u>Faith</u>, p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Schleiermacher, On Religion, pp. 51, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 212, 214, 216.

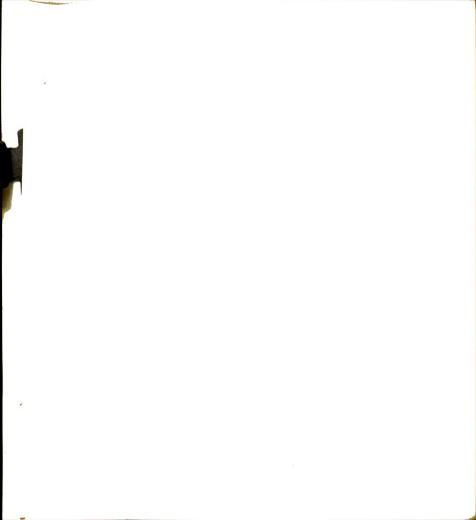


## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

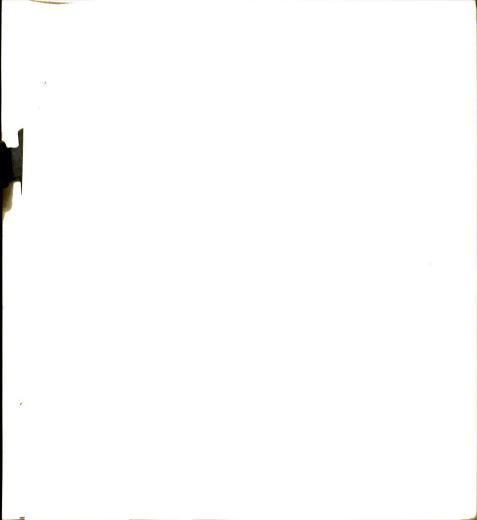
Although a central concern of Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion is the delineation of the essence of religion <u>sui generis</u>, he developed his position in terms of the alternatives he perceived in the historical context of his culture. Hoping to strengthen the Christian witness, he came to believe, in the light of his situation in 1799, that the most crucial issue at stake was the function of religion itself. Attempts to debate which religion is the true religion would be empty if thinking men dismissed the need for religion in the modern age. Schleiermacher refused to resurrect those interpretations of religion which appeared to him no longer viable in the new day.

Schleiermacher rejected those options which he felt compromised the uniqueness of religion. The developments of eighteenth-century philosophy had rendered unconvincing religion's claims to supernatural truth. Theology no longer reigned as the master of philosophic and scientific knowledge. Enlightenment thinkers who



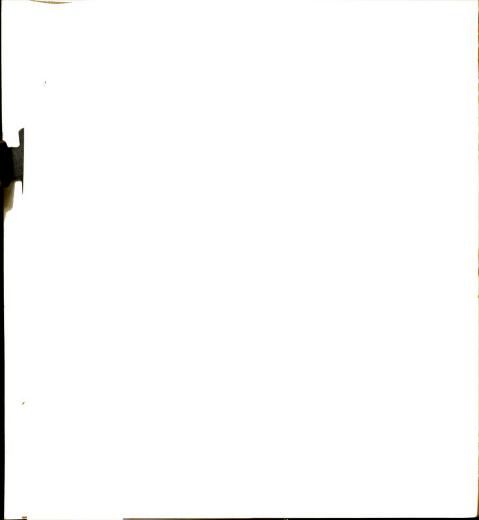
reduced the noetic content of religion to a bare minimum commended religion for its moral utility. Schleiermacher insisted that approaches which characterized religion primarily in either cognitive or ethical terms eliminated the recognition of specifically religious experiences.

Schleiermacher failed to persuade many to accept his analysis and definition of religion, despite his enormous influence. In contrast to the responses which developed around his colleague Hegel, no school formed specifically to advance Schleiermacher's philosophy. The movement of religious liberalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century attracted an impressive following in Europe and America. Liberalism, while freely willing to de-emphasize the noetic objectivity of theology, vigorously championed religion in predominantly ethical terms. Neo-orthodoxy, which emerged in the twentieth century after World War I, rejected this moralistic liberal religion. Barth, for example, appreciated Schleiermacher's valiant efforts to rescue Christianity from oblivion, but condemned Schleiermacher's approach and its resulting achievement. Schleiermacher's solution was deemed an unsatisfactory compromise because its subjectivity made revelation relative to human self-consciousness. The rigidity of Barth's insistence on the revealed basis for theology suggests a reversion to the objectivity of orthodoxy Schleiermacher proposed to transcend.



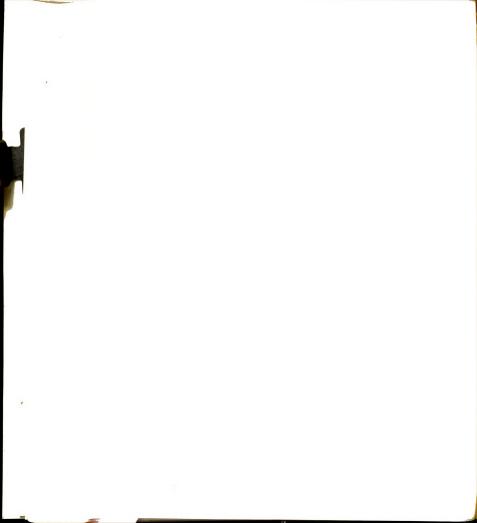
Although Schleiermacher challenged the priority of the noetic factor in religion, he realized that the religious experience itself is not entirely devoid of a cognitive element. Religious intuition signifies a receptivity to the Infinite apprehended through feelings. Theology was characterized by Schleiermacher as an empirical science which describes states of God-consciousness, or piety, actually experienced by people at particular times and places. The content of theology, which is derived from religious experience, defies the predication of truth or falsity. Schleiermacher's relational theology repudiates any understanding of religion which claims the authority of either metaphysical truth or scientific fact.

In his own historical situation Schleiermacher was persuaded that no resolution of prevalent religious disagreements was possible without fresh attention to the nature and function of religion itself. In assessing the effect of the Enlightenment on modern man's understanding of himself and his world, Schleiermacher concluded that the prevailing preconceptions about religion would prove increasingly untenable and result in more widespread skepticism. In order to convince his contemporaries of the irreplaceable value of religion, to say nothing of traditional Christianity, Schleiermacher challenged the fundamental presuppositions regarding religion held by his contemporaries. Until a valid and unique character were



granted to religion, discussions about which particular religion is best would be pointless.

If it was important in Schleiermacher's cultural milieu to focus on the unique character and function of religion, presuppositions about the nature of religion cannot be overlooked in the current era of rapidly accelerating social and scientific change. The value of religion is, no doubt, being even more seriously challenged today than it was in Schleiermacher's time. Much contemporary criticism of religion is preoccupied with the problem of noetic content of religion. At the present time writers, in the name of honesty and candor, adopt stringent scientific models for evaluating religious language which. according to Schleiermacher's conception, must result in the impoverishment of religion. Placing an undue priority on cognitive truth may eventuate in a progressive reduction of the noetic contents of religion, within the framework of analytical philosophy and empirical science. Despite the importance of the thesis that a satisfactory concept of religion must be found in some other more adequate alternative than either the noetic or the ethical, Schleiermacher's particular philosophy of religion may not be widely imitated. In a new generation of "cultured despisers of religion," however, his contribution remains relevant. He forces attention to presuppositions about religion which can foreclose crucial issues, and locates the underlying question: What is religion?



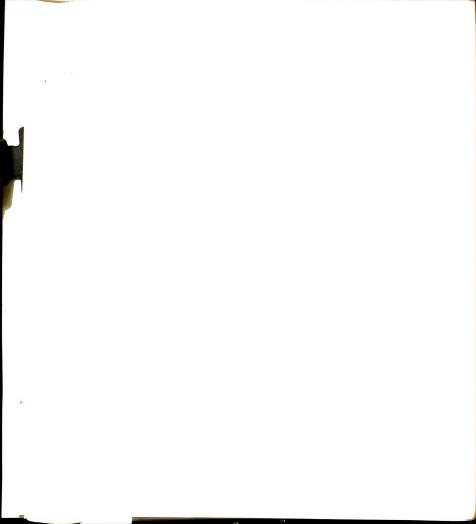
Among contemporary theologians Paul Tillich bears the closest affinity to Schleiermacher. Both men were educated in the German philosophical tradition and they were scholars of classical Greek philosophy. Tillich, like Schleiermacher, was not afraid to devote separate consideration to religion without feeling his Christian commitment compromised. Tillich pursued even more self-consciously Schleiermacher's conviction that religion and culture are inextricably interrelated. As Schleiermacher strove to overcome the dichotomy between nature and supernature by envisioning the whole man in one universe. Tillich attempted to avoid the subject-object cleavage. The holistic emphasis of Tillich attacked prevalent distortions of faith. Moreover. Tillich credited Schleiermacher with establishing the autonomy of religion with respect to ethics and pointed out the mistaken understanding of religion as feeling portrayed in strictly emotional and psychological categories.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the fact that Tillich is philosophically oriented, he recognized the danger of an intellectualistic distortion of faith. He believed that, since philosophy through detached objectivity is concerned with ontology in a cognitive fashion, philosophy is incapable of apprehending religious meanings. Both Schleiermacher and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Tillich, <u>Systematic</u> <u>Theology</u>, III, 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Tillich, <u>Systematic</u> <u>Theology</u>, I, 15, 41-42; III, 132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 22.



Tillich were engaged in a search for new language through which religious meanings can be expressed under conviction that there can be no scientific substitutes for religious statements. In his <u>Systematic Theology</u>, Tillich wrote,

I must confess that the present system is essentially, but indirectly, influenced by the Spirit-movements, both through their impact on Western culture in general (including such theologians as Schleiermacher) and through their criticisms of the established forms of religious life and thought.

Both Schleiermacher and Tillich have been accused of pantheism. This charge is related to their aversion to an anthropomorphic concept of God. Tillich made an explicit comparison of his terminology with that of Schleiermacher on this point. "Schleiermacher's 'feeling of absolute dependence' was rather near to what is called in the present system 'ultimate concern about the ground and meaning of our being.'" In addition, Tillich acknowledged his debt to Schleiermacher's Christology and the existential interpretation of it. 4

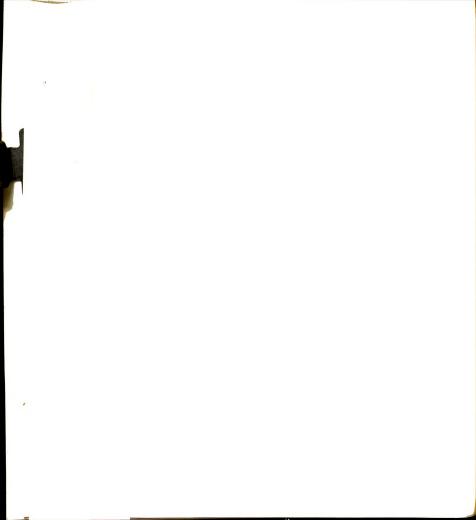
The influence of Schleiermacher on Tillich is not sufficiently noticed. Each of these men was a philosophical theologian with his own unique formulations that cannot be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 126.

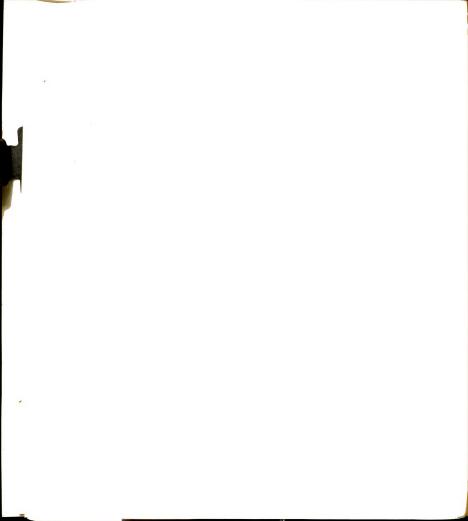
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, II, 150.

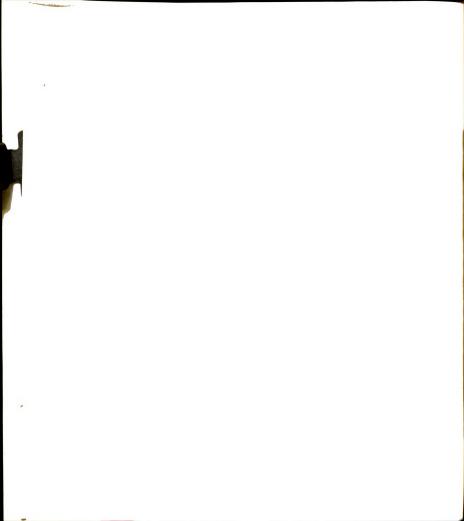
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 285.



equated. The present inquiry suggests possibilities for future study of the importance of Schleiermacher in the development of Tillich's thought.



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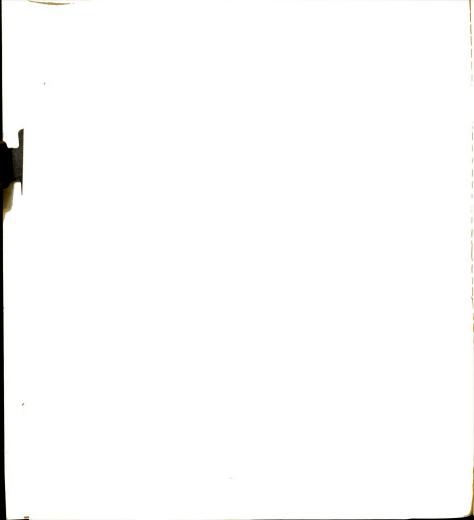
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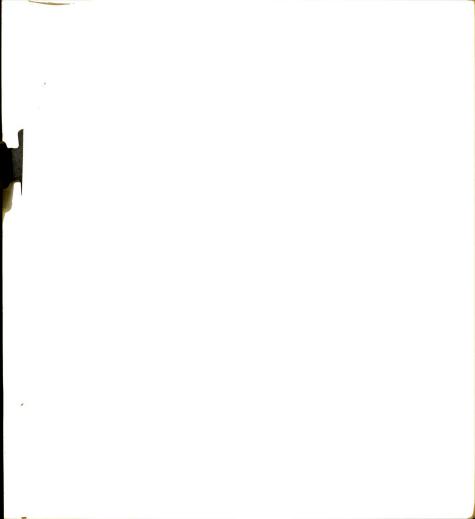
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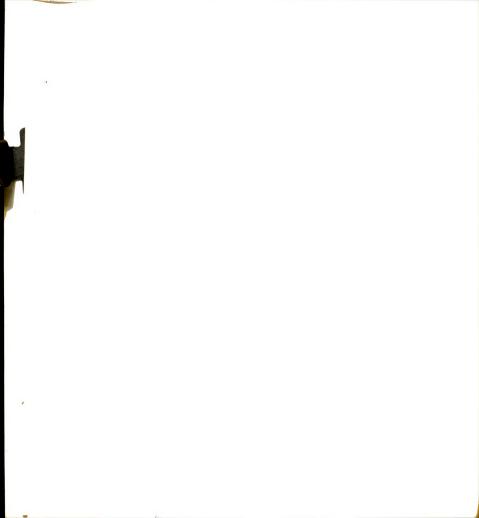


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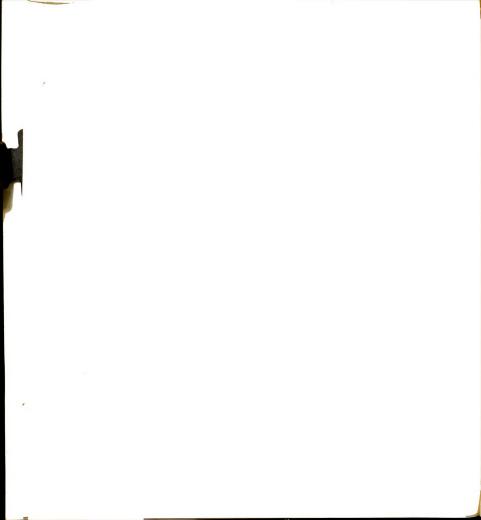
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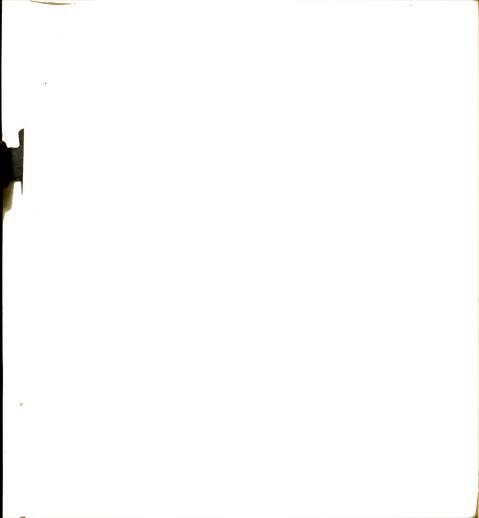


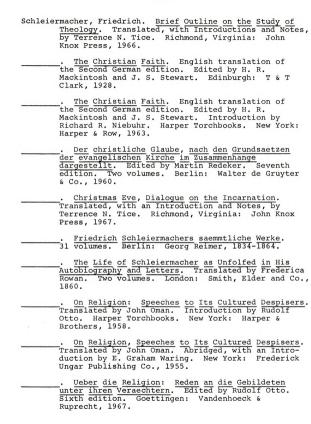
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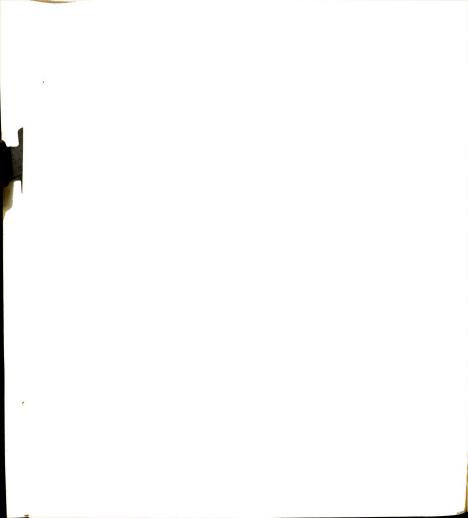
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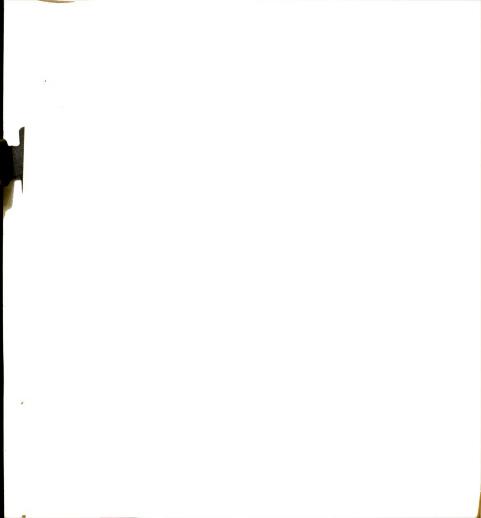






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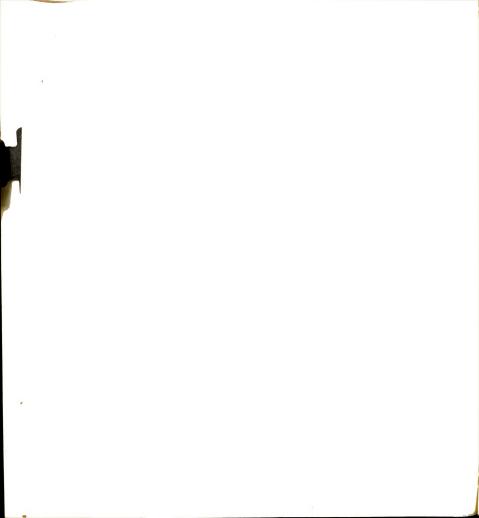


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