

The Incarnate Christ¹⁶

Now the world became quiet. The time was at hand. The preexistent Personality described in the previous chapter is to appear *as* Christ.

First everything has to occur which could occur merely externally. The purely external conquest of the opposed principle required no power, no appearance from the heavens ... and the externally obvious end of Paganism (not the end in general) was attained with Romanism. The later Roman consciousness represents the complete indifference toward this process. It itself did not represent a moment in the process, but all earlier moments flowed together in it, and it showed the impossibility of further advance ... by going back into the past, reawakening the ancient Oriental religion with whose superstitions Rome at the time of Christ was filled.

A general feeling was then prevalent over the world that something completely new and unexpected must come ... The whole world, and even the power of the earlier religions, had become silent before the *external* political superiority of the Romans ... This external empire was, so to speak, the ground in which the seed of the divine Kingdom was to be sown. At the same time, the Jewish particularism had to be brought closer to its expiration under the Roman yoke. Now when this

time was fulfilled ... God sent His Son, born of a woman, and born even under the (external) Law (VI:544f).

A. The Incarnation of Christ

Concerning the Intelligibility of the Incarnation (VI:545-547)

We have arrived at "the most important and most essential moment in the whole development": the Incarnation. Some feel, of course, that the Incarnation of the Son of God is an inscrutable mystery (*mysterium imperscrutabile*) for which it is impious or presumptuous to seek a scientific explanation. But Schelling is not deterred by such objections and points out that many things once considered incomprehensible have come later to be understood (VI:545f).

Now when we deal with "the voluntary incarnation of Christ", we are dealing with a question of *fact* but not one that can be sensually perceived. Hence our problem is to *understand* it, to "*think*" it, to see what is *meant* by it, else we shall have "no fact at all." Even those who regard the Incarnation as an impenetrable mystery should be able to say what they mean by the word. As a matter of fact, theology has always *tried* to assign a meaning, but whether those traditional meanings are admissible must now be determined, for even if a positive explanation were to elude us it would be important to know what the Incarnation is *not*.

Critique of a Traditional Doctrine of the Incarnation (VI:548-552)

An idea "that has been around for a long time" holds that the *man* Jesus was not conceived and born as other men are, but was "specially *created* by divine omnipotence." Thereupon, the second divine personality simply *connected* himself with this man, "allying himself with what was most inward and most perfect in him, up to the point of identity of person, so that one can say: one and the same person is God and man." On this view, the deity itself underwent no change. It did not become humanity. Something was merely *added* to it. Hence the divine person is said to have merely "put on" this independently-existing human nature already created for it (VI:548).

This traditional theory is *trying* to say that Jesus is both God and man but, in Schelling's view, it completely fails to accomplish its purpose intelligibly. Its unsatisfactory aspects and implications may be summarized as follows.

(a) If the man Jesus is created independently by God, then the

humanity of Christ becomes "physically independent of the Logos and of the *will* of the Logos to exist as man" (VI:550).

(b) If the Logos merely "*connected* himself with a man", then "he has emptied himself of nothing" - contrary to plain New Testament teaching (VI:550).

(c) If the Logos undergoes no change in the Incarnation, then the meaning of *kenosis* (self-emptying) is reduced to mere *non-usus* (i.e., the view that Jesus simply refrains from using or demonstrating his true nature) (VI:551).

(d) As a result, the Logos does not become truly personal, and the humanity serves to *veil* rather than *reveal* the divinity of Christ. Indeed, the humanity of Jesus is really negated in this hypostatic union (VI:550, 554).

Over against this view, Schelling holds that the subject which became man was not the pure deity, but that extra-divine divine potency who was in the *form* of God, and who truly emptied himself precisely of this *morphe theou* by his incarnation (an act of his *true* divinity, for only the *God* in him is capable of that self-emptying), and truly assumed the form of a servant (*morphe doulou*) through which the original deity becomes most luminously visible ("we beheld his glory"). There is no need for (i) a *special act* of divine omnipotence to *create* the man Jesus, or (ii) a *special act* of the divine Logos by which he *added* something to himself (VI:549). As Schelling puts it:

If the Incarnation is an emptying, then the humanity or human nature of Christ must be just the pure *result* of this self-emptying, of this act in which he emptied himself not of deity - for he makes this visible again by his act - but of the *morphe theou*. The man Christ came into being not merely because of, but in-and-through the fact that he who was in the form of God willed to empty himself of this. If the Logos *merely joins* himself with the man ... then it has *not* emptied itself but remains what it was (VI:550f).

There is a parallel in 2 Cor 8:9 - 'You know the grace of our Lord, that he, though he was rich, for your sakes became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.' This 'being rich' (*πλουσιος ων*) corresponds to the 'being in the form of God', just as the 'he became poor' (*επηχευσεν*) corresponds to the 'he emptied himself' (VI:551).

[Hence] ... the *kenosis* is not a getting rid of the essential deity but of the *unessential morphe theou* which, strictly speaking, was only accidental as far as the Son was concerned (VI:552).

The *Subjectum Incarnationis*

It is "nothing less than absurd", in Schelling's view, to speak vaguely of an incarnation of *God*, for "God did not become man, even though he who became man is God" (VI:556f). The Church Fathers "warned that the union of deity and humanity must not be a *μεταπτωσης* or a *μεταβολη* of the deity"; and St. John says only that the Logos *was* God, i.e., only *in the beginning*; and St. Paul affirms only that God became manifest in the flesh, not that he *became* flesh (1 Tim 3:16). Nevertheless, the common theory persists in regarding the Logos before the Incarnation as pure God. Then, since no change in the deity is conceded, the Logos is not recognized as *becoming man* in any genuine way. All that is admitted is "a mere *αναληψις*, a mere taking up (*Aufnahme*) of manhood into the deity" (VI:554). Schelling's view avoids this outcome by conceiving the subject of the incarnation to be not pure God - nor man, of course - but a "middle" reality, namely, the Logos who *was* God in the beginning but, "after what happened in between", is *now* the extra-divine divine Subject (*aussergöttlich-göttliches Subject*) (VI:555, cf. 553), the divine which is posited as extra-divine.

There is here no transition from being purely God (*reinen Gottsein*) to being man, but only a transition from being *en morphe theou* to being *en morphe doulou*, i.e., a transition from one state of being to another. It is not the divine nature itself, but only 'the divine subject which is posited outside the divine' (*das aussergöttlich = göttlich gesetzte Subject*) who, surrendering his extra-divine *majesty*, is acknowledged as man. The immediate subject of the Incarnation is, for us, not the Logos as God, but as extra-divine-divine personality. But for this very reason we can correctly say 'he *became* man'. It is not necessary for us, as it is for the other theory, first to posit *outside* one another the *subjectum incarnationis* and the man Jesus, and then to bring forth artificially the unity of the divine and human nature only by a subsequent unification which, in its turn, can be contrived only by a violent negation of the independence of the man. Our presentation permits us to bring forth this unity as something positive ... (VI:555f).

... the most careful theology has never spoken literally of an incarnation of God, but only of a divine person ... 'God became man'

means: the divine became man, yet not the divine, but rather the extra-divine aspect of the divine (*das Aussergöttliche des Göttlichen*) became man. There are here from the beginning *not* two personalities, one of which must be negated, ... but only *one* person, the divine, which reduces its extra-divine being to human being and precisely thereby appears itself as divine. The human being is *its* being; it has willed it and given it to itself, but for that reason it itself is beyond this being ... As far as the divine which remained in the extra-divine is concerned, the Incarnation is not a becoming-other but simply a becoming-visible ... (VI:557).

The Logos did not cease to be *outside* God, nor did it negate its *essential* divinity. Both must remain if the Logos is to be truly Mediator, for "it must be relatively independent of the two which are to be mediated." The point about the Incarnation is simply that the Logos, *in* its extra-divinity, divested itself of the *divine form*: "the process of *becoming-man* is none other than this emptying, and the humanity is (not the veil but) the pure expression, the pure product of this emptying, without the material cooperation of another cause" (VI:558, 559).

Schelling believes his explanation fulfils the two requirements of the old rule: *ne distrahantur naturae, neve confundantur*, for "it does not tear the natures asunder but allows them to be united personally, nor does it mix them, since the human and divine are related as substantial and supra-substantial", impersonal and personal, respectively, making them by nature unmixable (VI:558).

The Purpose of the Incarnation (its Ethical Aspect) (VI:560f)

The purpose of the Incarnation is two-fold: (i) to overcome the opposing Principle (B) not just externally but in its ground, and (ii) to overcome the *Will* of the Father, "causing him to turn his true essence and gracious nature once more toward mankind" (VI:560).

We have already seen (a) that the principle B "set us at variance with God and separated us from him": (b) that the mediating potency operating in its extra-divinity (in Paganism and Judaism) effected only an *external* conquest of that principle; and (c) that the pagan cultus, "a constantly recurring propitiation or overcoming of that opposing principle", never effected more than "a kind of healing which removes the symptoms while leaving the cause of the sickness intact" (VI:559). Now, therefore, we can see all this as but prelude for "the true and

perfect reconciliation" accomplished by the incarnate Christ who finally subdued the opposing Principle and turned the Father's Will around.

The *Father* could not *himself* negate this Will ... Man could not negate it, being completely powerless and weak over against it. Even the Mediating potency ... could not negate it by merely *necessary* or natural action.

Will can be overcome only by will, indeed, only by a will which, because it is stronger than death, no will, not even the strongest, can possibly withstand. What was needed was not a physical but a *moral* conquest of the Will, and this was possible only by the *most complete but at the same time completely free submission* to the deity. This was accomplished by the mediating potency in the place of man ... (VI:560).

The reconciling potency is in *complete* freedom over against God and is in no way required to make that sacrifice of himself ... But Christ acquired sovereignty over the external principle only in order to sacrifice it and with it to sacrifice himself in this extra-divine glory.

The final act - and everything that went before really pointed to this and led up to it - was the sacrifice of the mediating personality itself who, as the guiltless, stood in the place of the guilty. But it could not succeed directly in actually sacrificing itself; for this the incarnation was necessary. The decision to sacrifice is certainly a wonder of the divine mind. Here the divine breaks through the natural. Here is the highest revelation (VI:561).

The Manner of the Incarnation (its Physical Aspect)

(VI:562-565, 569-571)

The Incarnation itself, i.e., the actual "transition," is unquestionably an extraordinary event and "cannot be explained on the basis of the principles of the merely material world." We must "move up to supra-material causes", and then, extraordinary as it is, it will be "in the higher order of things not unnatural but natural and intelligible" (VI:571).¹⁷

Now it is Schelling's thesis that "the mediating potency is itself the *stuff*, just as it is itself the *cause*, of its incarnation" (VI:562). It has made itself - not its real self, but its extra-divine substantial being - the *stuff*, i.e., the material possibility, of the incarnation. This view must be carefully explained.

Schelling recalls two points elaborated elsewhere: first, that materiality and immateriality, being and nonbeing, are not absolutely opposed concepts; and second, that "what once was immaterial can only materialize itself by opposing something *higher*" (VI:562). Now the Principle (B), originally immaterial, materialized itself in the moment that it assumed a material relation over against the higher potency (A²) (VI:563).¹⁸ In the same way, A² can materialize itself only in relation to A³. After the Fall, these two potencies were in tension, but now in the Incarnation the second potency (the Logos, the Christ) gives up the tension against the third potency (the Spirit) - "this happened precisely in the process we have called 'materializing'." This makes the third potency possible, and the second "identifies itself with it" - a moment which, accompanied by visible appearances, occurred in the *Baptism* of Christ. Here "the substantial nature of Christ made itself accessible to the Spirit, as Holy Spirit" (VI:563, 564).

Thus the first ground of the humanity of Christ is established by the fact that the second potency materialized itself over against the higher. Naturally, it is not the personality as *such*, but the natural, the substantial, which materializes itself in such a way, and you see here again how necessary it is to define that personality not merely as *personality* but also as *natural* potency, to ascribe to it a *substantial* being ..." ("The *substantial* is precisely what is independent of God in him" and "the Logos, according to his *substance* reduced himself to the material") (VI:571).

But the mere materializing did not mean that it was yet a *creature*, so the extra-divine divinity is completely stripped away as it assumed *creaturely* form. Thus, 'it materialized itself' means: it makes itself the stuff of an organic process, of the highest organic process of course, for it is to step into the place of man, it must be instead of man. But as demiurgic potency it is free and accessible to all, excluded from *nothing*. Since, through its *own* activity, it makes itself the stuff of an organic process (always understood as effected against the higher potency which, to be sure, concurred therewith), it is completely free to choose the place for this materialization, and to choose for the purpose - as mother - an already living human being, in order to be born as man from woman ... When Christ gave up all sovereignty, *he gained only a right to be outside God*, not negating but ... confirming his

extra-divinity, so that he can be eternal mediator ... He committed himself to the extra-divine being by the incarnation (VI:564f cf. 569).

Thus Schelling holds that the second potency, the Logos, the preexistent Christ, materialized himself, "in the power of the higher potency" (the Spirit), and made himself (itself) the stuff or matter or possibility of a future birth. As Mt 1:20 says: "that which is conceived in her is *εκ πνευματος αγιου*, of the Holy Spirit" which means "in the power of the Holy Spirit", says Schelling, taking the *εκ* not *sensu materiali* as indicating the *causa ex qua*, but *sensu potentiali*. Here, thinks Schelling, the evangelist said more than he understood (VI:569, 570 cf. Lk 1:35)!

Jesus, of course, cannot be called a "Son of the Holy Spirit". "The Spirit was active in that moment not *σπερματικως* but *δημιουργικως*", not as seed but as architect. This may be understood as follows:

If A² becomes the stuff (i.e., = the first potency), then A³ becomes (equal to) the second potency, i.e., the demiurgic function moves forward to the third potency. Thus the first formation of that relatively material but also relatively immaterial foundation of the man Jesus. From this point the man Jesus is born just as is every other man, in a purely natural way (VI:569).

Another expression seems to be similarly instructive: the Holy Spirit has acted here merely *οικονομικως*. The scholars among the Church Fathers understood by the divine economy not merely the plurality of the divine personalities, but the relation, the order, by virtue of which they at the same time operated and appeared as successive potencies following one another (VI:569).

The Objective Historical Character of the Incarnation (VI:565-567)

The birth of Christ has an absolutely objective truth. The reconciliation in Christ is an *objective* event which negates the divine Unwill *itself* (not just its *effect*). After the Incarnation, all pagan Mythology is seen as fable and illusion. These points are elaborated as follows:

The Subject which was in the beginning with God and which, indeed, was God in a sense - this Subject by which, in the course of time, everything was made, and which was then (after the Creation, since the Fall) *in the form of God* and the real Lord of human consciousness -

this same Subject, when the time was fulfilled, was born at a determinate time as man. This birth is a final event, but one which is completely external, taking place entirely within the sphere of other external occurrences. *This* fact could *not* occur merely in the consciousness of mankind. Unlike the facts of mythology, it could not have a merely subjective-objective truth. For it, an absolutely objective truth was necessary. It must be something which takes place independently of human representations (VI:565).

What was only subjective there in Paganism ... must here occur objectively. What there was fable, here becomes truth. Precisely what the Pagans merely believed or imagined - that God exists in human form - now becomes manifest truth, seen with human eyes ... A history such as we have just covered ... *could* end only by *such* an event. *Such* a happening *must* bring *such* a story to a close. With *this* appearance, the former ecstatic history passes over into real history ... The ecstatic consciousness which was outside all reality returned into the ground of reality (VI:565f).

He who was *en morphe theou* was, in this form, as natural potency, the principle of Paganism. When he emptied himself of this form unto death - in the *one who died* in such a way, died the whole of Paganism. After this fact, everything that the pagans had believed about gods in human form, or even about mortals to whom they ascribed unusual births, was seen as illusion. When the facts themselves occur, the mere shadow of the same disappears. Over against such an *objective* fact, which went on before the eyes of the disenchanted world, everything that had been earlier believed disappeared and *turned into fable*, even though initially it was not mere poetic fiction but was grounded in a certain subjective necessity. It is a well known fact that history since the appearance of Christ assumed a completely different meaning than it had *before* his appearance (VI:567).

B. The Person of Christ

The Sinlessness of Jesus (VI:571-574)

This explanation helps us to understand better both the doctrine of the Person of Christ and specific doctrines associated therewith. For example, the descent of Jesus from David and the ancestors of the race, the absence of original sin in Jesus, and his sinlessness in general, now

become more intelligible. Schelling holds (a) that although Christ created the first stuff of his organic-human being out of himself, he remains *a descendent of the Fathers* (David, the Patriarchs) through Mary his mother - just as the common theory claims (VI:571). But (b) he does not therefore inherit *original sin* through his mother! The common theory is in difficulty here, for it will not hold that Christ was created out of nothing so it assumes "a stuff *in* the mother which was supernaturally vivified". But this raises "the familiar difficulty that the human mother cannot be imagined as excluded from so-called original sin." In Schelling's explanation, however, the real "stuff" of the Incarnation is not "in the mother" but created by the Logos out of itself (VI:571f). Furthermore, (c) the *sinlessness* of Jesus ("He became like us in all things except sin") can now be explained. Thus,

... if the first stuff for the humanity of Christ had been taken from this material world, then he would have participated according to his humanity in the general disorderliness (*Ataxie*) of this world. But if that basic stuff was not of this world, ... if it became material only in the *Actus* of the Incarnation, then we can comprehend how this Principle - which materialized itself only over against the higher potency while it completely retained its spiritual, dominating characteristic over the lower - put on the stuff of this subordinate material world, without which actual man, i.e., a man just like us, would be impossible ... and withstood the *Ataxie* ruling in the same. In this way a completely holy man was produced (VI:573f).

True, since the *substantial* being of the Logos was extra-divine, independent of God, "it was in a way *unholy*, ... in the *sense* that everything that is outside God is unholy." But the incarnate Logos has made this being completely submissive and obedient to the Father, thus sanctifying it (Jn 10:36, 17:19) and making it "the vessel, the attracting potency of the Holy Spirit." In this submission, perfected by death, we see "the transition to the birth of the third potency" and the restoration of "the birth of God in three persons".

According to the unanimous witness of the New Testament, the real advantage of the Incarnation and of the death of Jesus, is that He thereby gained *for us* the Holy Spirit, hence the divine birth in the three persons, interrupted by the Fall, is restored; for this is what is meant when it says that we become again *children of God*. Because of

this restoration of the whole divine being in man, the Apostles were instructed to baptize all peoples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (VI:573f).

The Bodily State of Jesus (and the Christ Ideal in Art)

(VI:574-576)

Schelling repudiates docetic views. Although "even the flesh of Christ was sanctified," it was a flesh similar to ours. Nothing must be taken away from the true humanity of Christ. "He was completely and truly a man and not a ghost or appearance (*Scheinkörper*)" (VI:574f, 579). Furthermore, this humanity of Christ existed "only by a continuous act of emptying." Christ says: "I have power to lose my life and to take it again", which, for Schelling, is a reference not to the death of Christ but to Christ's independent, extra-divine being. "The whole human life of Christ is *maintained* only by this *will*, hence He can say (Jn 4:34): 'To be obedient to the Father - that is my food' (the means of preserving my human existence)" (VI:584f).

Our hypothesis ... cannot be compared with the view of the Valentinians - and others who were opposed to matter - who denied that Christ had a flesh similar to ours, and taught that he had brought a body with him from heaven with which he passed through Mary as through a channel. Our hypothesis is that Christ created the stuff of his incarnation out of his own substance which, however, was reduced from the divine in him to the potency of a man. We add that this potency was subjected to the very same organic process which is necessary for the birth of a real, actual man. Only first the possibility of incarnation must lie in him in order for him to be able actually to become man.

Of course ... with the incarnation of Christ there came into the world a completely new element which was not there before. But this cannot derogate from the true humanity of Christ. Only a *substantially* new principle came thereby into the world, and it came not as something which had nothing in the world analogous to *itself*. Rather did the divestment of sovereignty consist precisely in the fact that it became subject to an existence analogous to that of other beings in this world and was subject to the same laws (VI:574).

Church Fathers and theologians have disagreed about "the external appearance of Christ." Was he the most beautiful of men (Ps

45), or externally unattractive, even ugly (Cf. Isa 53), or neither? To Schelling, there was "an element which was not of *this world*", underlying the external physical aspect of Christ. "In this respect it seems to me that in sculpture and painting the true Christ-ideal has not yet been represented" (VI:576).

Concerning the Union of the Two Natures in Christ (VI:576-579)

Now a central question: How can Christ's original deity exist with his perfect humanity? As in the doctrine of the Trinity, so here in the doctrine of the Person of Christ, theology must sail between the twin cliffs of "two-much" and "too-little". In the former doctrine these dangers were Sabellianism and Arianism, in the latter, Eutychianism and Nestorianism.

1	2	3
Christ is <i>composed of</i> two natures but <i>not</i> <i>in</i> two natures	Christ is <i>composed of</i> two natures and is <i>in</i> two natures	Christ is <i>composed of</i> two natures but only <i>in one</i> person
(Eutychianism) (Monophysitism)	(Nestorius asserted no more although he did not distinguish nature and person)	(Orthodox view)

Eutyches says: *before* the union there are two natures, *after* the union only one. Hence Eutyches' later disciples are called Monophysites ... Opposed to him, Nestorius, *fuga oppositi*, is moved to suppose that *in* the union there are *two* subjects, two persons - divine and human. Both, Eutyches and Nestorius, agree that *before* the union there are two persons, but the orthodox view also assumes this ... Hence the following schema [as shown above] (VI:576).

Schelling finds all these views unsatisfactory. The orthodox view is, in fact, only "a disguised Nestorianism", for it really recognizes *two* persons in Christ but proceeds forcefully to negate one of them (the human). The only possible fourth view is "to deny that which all three presuppose, namely, that Christ is *composed of* two natures, and to assert that Christ is *in duabus* but not *ex duabus naturis*" (VI:577). As we have

seen, Schelling holds that the *subjectum incarnationis* was *neither God nor man*, but the Logos as a mediating third, an extra-divine divine personality, a *natura sui generis* who "in the act of incarnation posits himself at the same time as divine and human." Schelling states the point a number of ways; for example, "the Logos transformed the *morphe theou* into a human creature" = "the Logos made itself the stuff of an organic process" = "the extra-divine divested itself of its divinity" = "the true divine freed itself and appeared as divine (in the incarnate Christ)", etc. (VI:564, 577f etc.). Therefore,

the act of the incarnation entails automatically that the incarnating Subject, without considering his absolute unity, nevertheless exists *in* two natures, and this is all one requires ... The divine (nature) *as such* did not exist *before* the incarnation, but only that mediator (*Mittlere*) existed then who is spoken of as neither unconditionally God nor as human. *In* the Incarnation, Christ is God and man at the same time and in one Person, just as *before* the Incarnation he was God and the extra-divine in one Person, in which, however, the divine was covered over by the extra-divine (VI:577f).

The divine does not posit *itself* as the human (this would be a contradiction), but the One Subject ... when it, as extra-divine divine, makes itself man, at the same time posits itself as divine (VI:578).

The divine in Jesus does not endanger the human in him, for how can the deity which appears and becomes manifest in Christ cancel *the very condition* of its appearance, namely, humanity? Remember that the Logos was deprived of pure deity (*entgottet*) when he became the extra-divine, merely cosmic potency, *not* when he made himself man! In being changed (*conversio*) completely into man, this Subject wins again "its unity with the Father and thus its own deity." In this sense Christ is "eternal man" (VI:579).

The Miracles of Jesus (VI:580-582)

Christ's miracles are such "only in relation to the common order of things. In the higher order to which Christ belongs they are merely *natural*." Schelling does not wish to hold (a) that the world is a (Newtonian) machine with God *outside* it (for then miracles would necessarily appear to be a petty interference), or (b) that God is *in* the world only as blind substance, or (c) that God is in the world with his

Will (for this seems to be denied by all "the division, confusion, error, sickness and evil in the world"). Hence (d) God must be "in the world with his *Unwill*, and present only *potentially* with his *Will*." Herein is given the possibility of miracle. If God is in the world at any point with his *Will*, then "the crooked must be made straight, the sick whole, the wrong set right." Christ's miracles - mostly healings - are like this, and are wrought by the power of the divine *Will* (VI:580).

The power of Paganism can, perhaps, be recognized in some miracles. Why, for example, did Christ choose to reveal his sovereignty during that "minor crisis" in Cana of Galilee? Schelling suggests that "in the course of his life Christ again became aware of himself *as* the potency of Paganism." Consider the change from "I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to "Go into *all* the world, teach and baptize *all peoples*." This represents an "immense step for one who was Jewish born." And notice that "he who provided wine in Cana and who, in another place, supplied bread for five thousand men, was honored by Pagans, without them knowing him in his truth, as the friendly and benevolent giver of wine and *brodfrüchte*." The miracles are signs (VI:581f).¹⁹

The Demiurgic Activity of the Incarnate Christ (VI:582-584)

It may help our understanding of miracles to recall that after the Fall God was no longer in the world with his *Will* or *Personality* - "except for his personal guidance of the Israelites." In "the totality and vastness of the world-all", God is present only with his *Nature* not his *Will*. He has turned his face from the world. The second person also ceases to have any *personal* relation to the universe, operating there as a demiurgic potency in a natural or will-less way. His personality has withdrawn and is "occupied with very different things - personally he is just Son of Man." Now a natural question arises as to whether the Logos continues his demiurgic activity as the incarnate one? If so, such omnipotent activity must preclude the real *humanity* of Christ. And yet, how can he have given it up?

Neither has the demiurgic activity ceased because the Subject of the same became man, nor does the Subject have this omnipotence *in* the humanity, i.e., *as* man (for this is impossible), since it belongs not to the manner of being but to the Subject itself.

... With respect to the One who became man, the demiurgic activity is an act of his *nature*, an *actus irreflexus*; not an act of his will but an act which he exercises *without* his will, hence one which is not affected by his willing to become man and for that reason not negated (VI:583, 584).

The humanity of Christ, therefore, is not related to the demiurgic activity any more than the weight of a piece of metal is related to or affected by the form in which it is cast. Natural acts are neither initiated nor cancelled by acts of will. So, "if God is somewhere in Nature with his *Will*, we say this is a miracle. Therefore, where a miracle is to happen, Christ says: 'you will see the glory (*Herrlichkeit*) of God.'" But the miracles also reveal the glory of the Son:

The prior condition for the Son to work again demiurgically with his *Will*, is that the Father be again in Nature with his *Will*. Hence the glorification of the Son in the miracles depends on the Father, as Christ consistently recognized (VI:584).

C. The Death of Christ

Schelling now moves directly to "the last and greatest act" of Christ's life: "the death freely accepted for the human race." Christ's death was not accidental but pre-decided. It was "a sacrifice which the divine mind of Christ imposed upon his humanity", and which God the Father "required, accepted and approved" (VI:585).

The Significance of the Death of Christ (VI:585-589)

How are we to understand the death of Christ? What, for example, might have been its causes *on God's side*?

As we have learned, the opposing principle had to be overcome in its root or potency if man was to be *inwardly* reconciled to God - and God himself willed this. But in God's eyes, "the mediating principle, so far as it is a merely natural potency, is *not worth more*" than the principle which separates us from God. God is the God of both principles equally, so both must be negated - demonstrating the impartiality of God's justice (VI:586).

He is the All-One, and it is his *nature* to be the All-One. He cannot negate this nature; it is above all will. God is therefore just toward that principle even though it estranged mankind and the world from him. His justice is his absolute impartiality, which is simply the expression

of his sublime All-Oneness (*All-Einheit*) ... Hence this divine majesty (this All-Oneness) does not permit only *one* principle to be broken and negated in its power. It is, one could say, God's highest law to preserve that *Contrarium*, for it is, in its ground, that in which he rises (when it is finally conquered) to the most powerful affirmation of his deity and sovereignty. He who knows this law has the key to what is enigmatical in the order of the world (VI:587).

So the second potency - whose nature and therefore sole will it is to overcome the opposing principle inwardly - "had to go first with its example", showing it knew how to negate itself not only by becoming man but by tasting death.

Immediately after the Fall, the Son of Man had taken on *himself* the divine Unwill, and placed himself *between* this Unwill and the being which had defected from God - the being which the Unwill could otherwise only destroy ... But when *he* himself entered into a relation with the being estranged from God, he placed himself on the side of the enemies of God. (He did *not* will to be in that situation, but he *did* will to stay there) ... When he interceded for us against God, put himself in our place, he took *our* guilt upon himself and therefore also bore the *liability*, the consequence, the punishment of that guilt. He who knew no guilt has made himself the guilty one because of his love ...

So then, it is literally true that *He* died in our stead, paid the ransom for us (Mk 10:45, Mt 20:28, 1 Pet 1:18f), for us his enemies, the enemies of his original deity, since man had set him out of his deity, i.e., out of his unity with the Father. He has redeemed our lives with his life, and freed us from the power of the Principle whose prisoners we were and which could be negated in its potency, its power, only by such an extraordinary deed. Only by such a miracle of love could it be ... completely enfeebled and *inwardly* overcome. We speak of a love far greater than that love which moved the Creator to create, a miracle of which we can only say: in truth, it is so - something we could never have *expected* or foreseen according to *any* human concepts, indeed, something we would not dare to believe if it had not actually happened (VI:471, 588f).

With the Cross of Christ, so to speak, "the whole human race was gathered together, Pagan and Jew." The Pagans were only "the

instrument", the Jews were "the instigators and agents", of his death. "The former had only the power, but the latter had the *will*" (VI:589f).

He was obedient not merely unto death, but unto violent death, even death on the Cross, the most grievous and ignominious of all deaths, unknown among the Jews, and introduced among them by the Romans. The principle of Paganism must die the death of the pagan. At the same time, there is in the crucifixion itself something meaningful and symbolic. The stretching out on the cross is only the last external appearance of the long tension in which he was posited through the whole earlier time (VI:590).

Presuppositions of the Doctrine of Reconciliation (VI:589-597)

There have always been those who felt that there was no *objective* necessity for the death of Christ, no independent cosmic Principle (opposing the reconciliation, the union of humanity with God) that needed to be overcome. Indeed, Schelling finds it understandable that the expiatory death of Jesus should be "a *scandal* to obdurate and narrow moralists" (the Jews), "a *foolishness* to merely natural thinkers" (the Pagans), and *unnecessary* to those philosophies which "recognize in the world no principle akin to God or deriving from God or belonging to the life of God" (VI:590f).

True, Christ's sacrifice would have been unnecessary had there been no principle opposing reconciliation, for then "the Loving Father, so to speak, could relieve the languishing creation directly and simply out of love." In fact, since Kant, certain theologians have held that the *only* relation between God and man (conceived as an ethical being) is a moral one, hence God can forgive us directly, and the death of Christ must serve only the pedagogical purpose of establishing in us "the wholesome conviction of the sanctity of the Law." But such thinkers seem to ignore the fact that the death of Christ is an outrageous violation of the Law, for the Law says: "the guilty shall suffer for himself and not one culprit for another, much less the guiltless for the guilty" (VI:591f).

But no text-twisting can change the "most distinctive affirmation of the New Testament", namely, "that Christ suffered not merely for us - for our good - but in our stead." Nor was the suffering just for form's sake, as, for example, in the past, "a young prince would have a playmate (kept for him for this purpose) who had to suffer the corporeal punishment which the prince had deserved, only in order that the latter might see the seriousness of the matter" (VI:592, 593).

The reconciliation through Christ is intelligible only on the basis of certain *general* presuppositions, viz., that "God himself is a nature, a life"; that he is related to man not merely in an ideal way, as Law-giver, but in a real way; that he is "vulnerable", and that man's transgression alters something not only in man but "in the objective principle of the being and existence posited by God" (VI:594).

In addition, certain *specific* presuppositions are needed if we are to understand the necessity for Christ's submission not just to incarnation but to *death* in effecting the reconciliation. We can put the matter as follows (VI:594-597): The divine Unwill, to which the mediating potency subjected itself, "was the cause of his death." Furthermore, the subjection had to be "unto death" else it would have been incomplete. Since it *was* complete, the *whole* of the principle of the divine Unwill was broken, for "that principle *is* the divine Unwill only in and to the extent that it excludes the mediating potency." But when the mediating potency gives up *all* tension against it, "this exclusion is made impossible for that principle, hence it is robbed of its power and negated as principle of that Unwill." As Hebrews 2:14 puts it, Christ partook of flesh and blood that "through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (VI:594f). Now man, "who had fallen completely into the power of that principle of the divine Unwill", could again be reconciled with God - not "directly or through himself, of course, but in the power of Christ, inasmuch as he 'put on Christ' (Gal 3:27, Rom 13:14)" (VI:596f).

The meaning, the real purpose of Christ's death is now clear: It gained for men the possibility, the power, the *freedom*, "to become children of God, i.e., to restore the divine life in themselves" (Jn 1:12).

Thus, what man could not do for himself, and what Christ was under no necessity to do for *himself* (he could have preserved that principle of the Unwill, had he not willed to restore in humanity the lost glory of God), this Christ has done in man's stead and therefore 'for him'. Christ steps over from God to the place of man, covers him over, clothes him, so to speak, so that the Father sees in man no longer man himself but Christ the Son (VI:597).

The Nature of Death and the Death of Christ (VI:598-600)

What *change* took place in Christ's person at his death? It might seem that, since Christ existed as fully man, he "died a death no different

from that which every man dies." But this is just our problem! What happens to *man* at death?

In the end, Schelling believes, there are "only two possible views concerning the nature of death. It is either (a) a *separation* (of body and soul) or (b) an *essentification* (in which man's essence is preserved).

The common view which sees death as a *separation* of soul and body, considers the body as a specimen of ore in which the soul is enclosed and hidden like some noble metal. Death is the separation process which frees the soul from this matter which encloses and surrounds it and presents it in its purity. The other view would be inclined rather to compare the effect of death to that process in which the spirit (*Geist*) or essence (*Essenz*) of a plant is extracted. It is thought that all power and all life which the plant had in itself passes over into the sap which is drawn from a plant ...

So the death of man might be not so much a separation as an essentification, in which only the accidental comes to an end, but the *essence*, what man really *is*, is preserved. For no man appears in his life as he really *is*; but after death he does. Therein lies the joyfulness of death for some, and its appalling terror for others. Both the accidental evil which here conceals the good, and the accidental good which here cloaks the evil, disappear (VI:599).²⁰

The separation view suggests to Schelling that only *part* of man continues after death, not man in his whole *esse*, whereas the essentification theory suggests that "the whole man persists, only spiritualized, essentified." Schelling prefers the latter view, for if there is to be "identity of consciousness in this life and the next," we must assume that one and the same man "appears in one kind of being during the present life, and continues on in another kind of being after death" - always one and the same man in his wholeness (VI:598, 600).

In the case of Jesus, then, "the *same* subject which is dead as visible man ... lives after death as spirit" (VI:600).²¹ Schelling appeals to 1 Pet 3:18-20, which reads:

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience

waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which ... a few were saved.

The Descent of Christ

The above passage has given rise to the doctrine of the descent of Christ *ad inferos*. Schelling understands the spirits "in prison" to be those who perished in the Flood (VI:600f),²² i.e., those who did not want to enter into a relation to the second potency and were therefore cut off from both Revelation and Mythology. They lived only in the first Principle and had never known a Deliverer; but now Christ preaches to them. They had been preserved in an intermediate state (*Zwischenzustande*) for future possible faith.

Furthermore, Old Testament passages indicate "that the condition of the deceased was not the same in every age; and herein rules a divine economy. Even in the spirit world, an Old and a New Testament must be distinguished." The Old Testament dead "could be illumined and blessed" by the expectation of future redemption" (VI:601).

D. The Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ

The three Stages of all Human Life (VI:601-609)

Characteristically, Schelling conceives human life in its wholeness or totality (*Gesamtleben*) as made up of three stages. These apply in general to the life of mankind as a whole, and in particular to each individual man.

To each succession three-ness belongs: (a) a wrong state, (b) negation of the wrong, (c) attainment of the right ... (Hence) after man has separated life in itself from life in God he can arrive at the unity destined for him only in three stages (VI:603, 602).

The first stage, the present life of man (which means, for the individual, the period from conception to death), is that of "a one-sidedly *natural* life", "a life of the freest movement". The second stage "must be that of a one-sidedly *spiritual* life", a life of "immobility" where "the power-to-be ceases" and "that which must be" reigns. The third stage is that of "a *spiritual-natural* life" where "the natural is raised into the spiritual", and "the spiritual is liberated again to the most free mobility". "This third moment is what is taught as a future

general resurrection of the dead, and indeed, as a resurrection of the flesh" (VI:602, cf. VI:606f).

The present life of man is *only* his natural life, hence it is not his *whole* life ... I do not say that the spiritual is *not there at all* in the present life (that would be a complete separation), ... but the natural life is the dominating, ruling one. (*Subjectively*, the spirit already predominates here ... *objectively*, it is subject to nature - changing from sleep to wakefulness, needing food and drink.) It is a *co-existence*, but the reverse of that which should be. The natural should be the latent, the hidden, the spiritual should be *manifest*. Now it is reversed: the natural is the revealed, the spiritual is the hidden ... (VI:603f).

If the second state is to be posited, "the preceding one must be negated, i.e., man must die in his natural life." Hence, far from death being an objection *against* immortality, "it is itself a necessary element of continuance" (VI:605).

Everyone dies, of course, but since Christianity sees death as a punishment for guilt doesn't this mean that everyone suffers, just and unjust? True, agrees Schelling, but "the suffering of each is very different." Those who live as spiritually as possible now, shall experience the next life as pleasant, "a rest in the Lord", while those who here "immerse themselves lustfully in the material life" will be tormented in the next by their incapacity to participate (VI:606).

The "old metaphysics" knew that it had to prove not merely the soul's survival of death (which may be quite short-lived) but the *immortality* of the soul, i.e., its necessary continuance by virtue of its nature. Hence, it tried to prove the soul's immortality (=indestructibility) by declaring it to be a unitary thing, not something composite (as corporeal bodies are). The soul, however, is "not something simple in the merely negative sense, but a *whole* of functions and activities which belong together." As such, it can disintegrate, grow weaker, decay ("as happens with increasing age"). Also, if the soul is only the incorporeal, animating *principle* of the body, it could, with the destruction of the body, lose all its individual characteristics and "return into its universality" (VI:608f). Man's immortality must be differently conceived.

The immortality of the human essence (*Wesen*) rests on an *indissolubility*, but an indissolubility of the three moments: (a) natural, (b) spiritual, (c) natural-spiritual life. These are presented so

indissolubly united that man, *so soon as* the first of these states is posited, shall necessarily live the second and the third, and since he cannot live them *simultaneously*, he passes through them *successively* (VI:609).

The Resurrection of Christ (VI:609-611)

Applying this speculation to Christ, Schelling can now regard the resurrection of Christ as the third stage in his *eternal humanity*.

The human life of Christ therefore becomes completely-human only if it goes through these three moments: (1) appearance in the flesh, (2) tarrying in the spirit-world, (3) return to the visible world in glorified human corporeality. Of the three days that are reckoned from the death of Christ till his resurrection, the first, for the most part, still belonged to his life in this world; the middle day brought him completely into the spirit-world; and the third was the day of his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ was the decisive proof of the irreversibility of his incarnation, and that he reserved to himself nothing but the divine mind (*Gesinnung*), the divine will. By the voluntary persistence in humanity even in (after) death ..., the Son induced the Father to accept again the human being in *him*, and therewith human being in general. The reacceptance took place precisely in the resurrection of Christ, or rather, the resurrection of Christ was nothing but the activity of this complete reacceptance. Hence it is said: Christ died for our sins and for our justification was raised again (Rom 4:25, cf. 5:5ff), i.e., as proof that human nature is again perfectly acceptable and just to God (VI:609).

The result of the resurrection, for *us*, was *justification*, acceptance by God. Hence the Christian life is one of peace and joy, far from "the melancholy, self-torturing thing that a misunderstanding of what Christ did for us can impose." Justification cannot come through works.

Since not our individual actions but our whole existence is reprehensible in God's eyes, it follows that our works cannot justify us ... Since man is conscious that he is displeasing before God in all his willing and action, this leads to that *despair* of the soul (*desponsio animi*), that unbelief, in which he feels it is all the same whatever he does ... because nothing can justify him before God ... There is the

utmost *anguish* (*Angst*) in the face of evil, but there is no courage toward the good without presupposing justification. Only when the whole present state is justified *can* there be individual good works (VI:610).

In becoming *man*, Christ was linked with the Holy Spirit, but in death (the *complete* sacrifice of his selfhood) "the Holy Spirit becomes the spirit of *Christ himself*." It is now the Spirit who "raises the incarnate one from the dead, hence Christ is *in the power of the Holy Spirit* both as dead and as resurrected" (Rom 8:11, 1:4; Heb 9:14). After the resurrection, "the *man* Christ for *himself alone* is equal to the *whole* deity. At the same time there is restored in him in a more glorious way the original man" (who lost the glory of God through the Fall). Hence, through Christ, the glory is also restored to *man*, and "that very reacceptance of human nature in Christ mediates the future reacceptance of the same in the *general* resurrection." "If we die in him we shall also live in him", but those who are not "dead in him" (not truly in him) have eternal death (VI:611 cf. Rom 6:5, 8; 14:11; 2 Tim 2:11; Rev 14:13).

Historical Significance of the Fact of the Resurrection

The Resurrection, says Schelling, is one of those "lightning flashes" in which the *higher* or *inner* history breaks into merely "external history" and illuminates the bare facts of human events as moments in the divine history of the universe.

The resurrection of Christ is the decisive fact of this whole higher history, a history which is not comprehensible, of course, from the common standpoint. Facts like the resurrection of Christ are like lightning flashes in which the higher, i.e., the true, the inner history breaks into (and enters) the merely external history. To remove these facts is to change history into a mere externality. That which provides history's support, its value and its only meaning, is removed the moment these facts are taken away. And how bleak, empty and dead, how stripped of all divine content history appears when it is robbed of its connection with that inner, divine, transcendental history which, strictly speaking, is the true history, history *κατ'εξοχην* ...

Not to dissolve external history in that higher history, but to preserve its connection with the latter, must be one of the activities of a

Philosophy of Revelation. Such facts, by which the inner history emerges externally, are but *few* in number, but no thoughtful person will regard this as sufficient reason to doubt them, for that would mean he was unable to recognize the inner and higher connection of things in general; and the meaning of history would then be that everything is related *merely* externally and blindly - a meaning which will be allowed him, of course, but which no one can envy him (VI:611f).

From Resurrection to Exaltation (VI:612-619)

As to the real state of Christ, the actual nature of his body, between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Schelling's comments are restrained:

If, for example, we were to say something about the nature of the body of Christ, transfigured and glorified in the resurrection (i.e., subject to no further dissolution) we would be reaching out beyond our experience. Philippians 3:21 says that Christ will one day 'change our lowly body to be like his glorious body.' Hence we must ask first wherein consists the future glorification of our bodies ... What is past is known; what is future is believed. But this much is certain: once an external, extra-divine world is accepted and approved in Christ, the final purpose (the original purpose which cannot be negated) ... can only be that the whole inner world, as it was originally supposed to be, should be presented externally, visibly, in the outer world, so that man, who inwardly is pure spiritual essence, should become *outwardly* a pure spiritual essence ... Also, for this hope we are indebted to Christ - to expect after the last crisis of the world (the Last Judgment) a new heaven and a new earth (VI:614).

Really to explain the nature of Christ's Ascension, says Schelling, would require a thorough examination of the nature of Space ("so-called infinite Space"). But here he avoids the challenge, although it should be noted, perhaps, that he does presuppose the Copernican system (VI:627f).²³

According to Philippians 2:6-8, it was because of Christ's obedience unto death that God highly exalted him, giving him the name above every name. The traditional theory, in holding that Christ's humiliation consisted precisely in his "non-use of the divine attributes", might now say that in Christ's exaltation God is again permitting him the free use of those attributes. But, Schelling objects,

“the pure and naked deity of Christ (*simplex et nuda deitas*)” is incapable of either humiliation or exaltation. The Subject of the exaltation is that same special Personality who experienced incarnation and endured death, the one “who can be called neither God nor man.” The exaltation is the Father’s recognition of him as “Lord, as Son of God in power, as heir of God, i.e., the one to whom he transfers all being” (VI:614-616).

This is the reward of Christ, that he *now* has a *right* to be outside God in his own form; that is, *now* he is not *without* (*ohne*) the divine will, but he is *with* the will of God outside (*ausser*) him, and is clothed with all glory in this *being-outside-God*. This deity, which he has as a *special* person, is the result of his voluntary humiliation ...

Christ is outside God through his eternal humanity; he is outside man and independent of man through his deity. ‘God has made him Lord’ could not be said of him who was not God (*theos*) in the beginning ... nor of him who was never other than contained in God and absorbed in the divine life. But it could well be said of him who was posited outside of the deity, and who [instead of choosing independence] humbled himself and submitted himself to God. This one could be *raised* to that Lordship and glory which he did not want to arrogate to himself or seize covetously (VI:616, 617).

The “perfectly literal meaning” of the New Testament supports this view, says Schelling. The resurrected Christ is *distinguished* from the Father (e.g., 1 Cor 8:6), he is *made* Lord by God (Acts 2:36), and his authority and glory are *given* to him (Mt 28:18) (VI:616-619).²⁴

Whoever recognizes Christ *in* his substance, as special Personality, and at the same time as the one to whom is given all power, has the true Christ, Christ as he is; and such a one is at the standpoint of the present being and life of mankind. So when, as the Apostle says, God in Christ has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, that highest relation of mediation is attained - the relation which *was there* already in the Creation, but only in thought. The secret of creation itself is presented in Christ so that every man can grasp and understand it as *immediate* truth and reality. One more thing: ... the *present* sovereignty of Christ has, to be sure, overcome that negation, that divestment of sovereignty, in which he was placed by the guilt of man. But since *this* (perfect) sovereignty of Christ is still *hidden*, there will be a final,

manifest and universal glorification of Christ still in the future (VI:619).

A Concise Summary

Of Schelling's numerous recapitulations, the following is perhaps the most clear, concise and complete:

By now, what was said at the beginning and often repeated, should be clear to all, namely, that Christianity is not a doctrine (*Lehre*) but a Subject (*Sache*). The real content of Christianity is Christ himself and his history, not the merely external history of his deeds and suffering during the period of his visible humanity, but the higher (history) in which his life as man is only a *transition* and therefore only a *moment*. The immediate object of the explanation is, of course, Christ in his *historical* manifestation. But this historical appearance is itself explicable only in terms of a context which stretches beyond it, one which extends on the one side back to the beginning of things and on the other forward to the final End-time. Nevertheless, the content of Christianity is not so-called universal religion. Its content is the special personality who, since the beginning of the present order of things, was outside God, but for that very reason was an independent personality. And yet this personality did not use this independence for his own advantage, but only for a voluntary subjection and sacrifice of itself, in order to change the divine Unwill into gracious goodwill once again. Christ thereby acquired extra-divine Lordship, recognized and willed by God himself, as *heir* of the Father. The Father handed over all things to him, for him to rule over them until that period, seen by the Apostle Paul in the farthest future of times, when, after overcoming all his enemies, all who strive against God, he gives back the Kingdom (the being ruled till now) to the Father, without losing his personality or his lordship over being. For because the Father has it only as something posited again in him by the Son, it is, in the Father, both the being of the Son and of the Father. And precisely with this last moment is posited the *perfect* community of the being between the Father and the Son and the Spirit - for the Spirit finally contains everything under itself and is, in this sense, also ruling (VI:620f: Lecture 33).

The Continuing work of Christ (VI:628-632)

The work of Christ is "a continuing one, reaching out into the most

distant future", for "everything is not yet subject to Christ", and we ourselves are not yet what we shall be. By "putting on Christ" we have received only the "freedom, power and possibility" to be children of God, to have the divine life restored in us, and to put on the Spirit. This is the first work of Christ. He had to go away so that "the last and highest mediator", the *αλλος παρακλητος* (Jn 16:7, 14:16) could come. "Only when *this* happens is the whole deity (*Gottheit*) actualized in us" (VI:628).

Thus Christ mediates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, makes possible the next moment in the history of God, brings to an end the whole cosmic religion, and inaugurates the religion of the spirit and of freedom.

Here is revealed the universal law of progress which guides us in our long investigation: what is earlier must *go*, i.e., must make room in order that what follows might *come*. Hence, since man, up till Christ's appearance, is ruled exclusively by the real principle on the one hand, and by the second potency on the other - the second potency is also cosmic or posited outside God and in this sense merely natural - then the death of Christ and, since this was only the result of the incarnation, the incarnation of Christ, was only the *going* of that mediating potency which condescended to become man just in order, by its death, to negate itself as a natural potency and therewith to end all tension. But in this way it made room for the third potency which, after the negation of all tension, is no longer a cosmic potency but the Holy Spirit ... Here appears in its last and highest form that divine economy which is based on the succession of personalities. Each succeeding person explains and glorifies the words of the preceding ... (VI:628f)

When Schelling says "in Christ the whole cosmic religion dies", he means its power is broken. The cosmic powers - "an immense number of them was posited by the tension" - do not cease to exist. Christ has simply taken from them their "necessary and invincible power." "Whatever powers might set themselves up after Christ's time are subject to him." Only when Christ finally hands the Kingdom over to the Father shall *all* extra-divine powers completely cease to be (Col 2:15, Eph 2:21, 3:9, 3:20f). Meanwhile these powers can make themselves felt at any point or in any moment of consciousness, and it

remains *possible* for man in his freedom to subject *himself* again to their influence and yoke (VI:630f).²⁵

The next chapter will therefore offer a discussion of these cosmic powers, of the primal anti-divine power, and of the whole world of spirits.