

NATIONAL STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION IN DIVINITY

CHURCH DIVINITY

1981

EDITED BY JOHN H. MORGAN

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PANEL OF READERS

NATIONAL STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION IN DIVINITY

Dedicated to

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is with no little delight that I edit this collection of essays from aspiring young scholars in the field of divinity. This project, i.e., the Church Divinity Monograph Series, has been developed specifically for the purpose of enhancing and encouraging theological creativity particularly among students who are still very much in the midst of "developing" their skills in theological expression. This Series, which is to be an annual event, hopes to provide a forum within which theologians, while still in their student years, might have an opportunity to compete for recognition and through early appearing in print gain the attention of the scholarly community and the Church at large.

The distinguished Panel of Readers for this inaugural issue of Church Divinity were selected not as specialists in the areas in which they responded but rather because of their reputation as scholars and teachers in the field of divinity. The Readers were not asked to evaluate the papers as experts but as educators of theologians who aspire to minister, to teach, to write. For their kind willingness to participate in this project, I am most appreciative.

This competition is open to any student enrolled in a fully accredited graduate theology/religion program of a seminary or university. The competition announcement went out to all institutions on April 1, 1981. The response was most encouraging and though all papers obviously could not be published, there were many fine papers which were submitted but do not appear in these pages. In the spring term of 1982, another announcement of the 1982 National Student Essay Competition in Divinity will be sent out. All faculty persons in relevant institutions are invited to encourage their students to participate in next year's competition. Inquiries about the competition should be sent to Church Divinity, P.O. Box 661, Notre Dame, IN 46556, in care of the Editor, The Rev. John H. Morgan, Ph.D.

JHM+

Holy Cross Day, 1981 A.D.

ESSAY NUMBER TWO

"SCHLEIERMACHER'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS
AND ITS RELATION TO HIS GENERAL ONTOLOGY"

Robert S. Corrington

In this essay we will be concerned with the complex relationships between Schleiermacher's phenomenology of consciousness and his implicit general ontology. In order to flesh-out these relationships properly it will be necessary to treat both separately.

In dealing with his phenomenology of consciousness we will concentrate upon the first division of The Christian Faith where it is spelled-out with relative completeness. This analysis will take us through the three stages in the evolution of self-consciousness through time. These stages are: animal self-consciousness, sensible self-consciousness, and higher self-consciousness. The final analysis in this division will concern itself with the relationships between sensible self-consciousness and higher self-consciousness.

In dealing with his general ontology we will concern ourselves with the Speeches, especially the second speech, and the latter half of The Christian Faith. This analysis will involve three stages. In the first part we will attempt to gain some understanding of the nature of the Infinite which is also termed, the Whole, the All, the Eternal, and God. This will involve a brief discussion of pantheism, theism, and panentheism. Schleiermacher's position will be distinguished from that of both Spinoza and Kant. Reference will also be made to an implicit neo-Platonism. In the second part of this division we will briefly discuss Schleiermacher's notion of the world. This will involve an analysis of multiplicity and reciprocity. In the third part of this division we will attempt the difficult task of exhibiting the internal relationships between the Infinite and the world. This will involve an analysis of the role of the mediator(s) in both the early and late Schleiermacher.

In the third division of this essay we will attempt to show the inter-relationships between the phenomenology of consciousness and the general ontology. This will involve a partial retracing of the previous analysis. The co-emergence of mind and world will involve an analysis of the ontology and theology proper to each stage of consciousness. This will involve an analysis of both Polytheism and Monotheism as discussed in The Christian Faith.

DIVISION ONE: PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Mapping out a topology of Schleiermacher's phenomenology of consciousness is a very difficult procedure. The reason for this is simple. Whereas Hegel lays bare the various shapes of self-consciousness in a strict serial fashion Schleiermacher deposits his

insights in several disconnected places. Thus we are forced to piece a topology together from isolated statements. However, once this is done it becomes obvious that Schleiermacher's phenomenology is both consistent and forceful. With this assurance we can proceed.

Schleiermacher distinguishes three stages in the evolution of mind through time. These stages represent both realized stages in human history and self-seizable possibilities in the present. In their unfolding lies the personal birth of consciousness qua self-consciousness. His description of these stages is as follows,

"Hence there seems to be no objection to our distinguishing three grades of self-consciousness: the confused animal grade, in which the antithesis (i.e., between subject and object) cannot arise, as the lowest; the sensible self-consciousness, which rests entirely upon the antithesis, as the middle; and the feeling of absolute dependence, in which the antithesis again disappears and the subject unites and identifies itself with everything which, in the middle grade, was set over against it, as the highest."¹

The first stage lies prior to the subject/object diremption. As such it can have no intentionality (i.e., neither noesis nor noema). Nor can it find itself within a stable space/time. No personal predicates (subject traits) can be assigned to it either by others or by an internal reflexive turn. Ontologically it is accurate to assert that animal self-consciousness is world. Borrowing a term from Jungian phenomenology we see here the state designated as a "participation mystique" in which subject and object are identified in a pre-reflective way. No articulate identity can exist for this stage of development. Thus the animal self-consciousness can be seen as little more than the 'location' of sensation.

However, this stage sublates itself into the higher shape (Hegel) of sensible self-consciousness. With this stage subjectivity as such is achieved. The noetic center of this subjectivity is brought-to-pass with the emergence of the subject/object diremption. At this point full intentionality arches-out from the noeti center to isolate and break-upon the world and its structure. For Schleiermacher the pure structures of space and time are objectively real (in contradistinction to Kant and Fichte). As such they are dis-covered rather than synthesized by finite subjectivity.

This world structure is grasped as a unity, namely, as a cosmos. This unity in-forms all beings and events found within the world. Yet this unity is essentially bi-polar. Active within this unity are the twin forces of activity and passivity. The bi-polar unity functions as a living reciprocity. This reciprocity of activity and passivity is the 'how' of unity. This unity of the world structure is an articulate whole. Concerning this Ueberweg states,

"As being a real unity, the world of manifold existence constitutes an articulate whole. The totality of all existing things is the world; the unity of the universe is the Deity. Whatever affirmations are made with reference to the Deity must be either negative or figurative and anthropomorphic. A reciprocity of influences exerted and received unites all the parts of the universe. Every part, therefore, is both active and passive."²

Underlying the bi-polar forces of activity and passivity is the Infinite (Deity) which works through these forces to achieve unity in time. The Infinite itself has no identifiable structure (God as hidden). As such it is radically alien to the finite, and knowable, world structure. Yet since it in-forms the world structure it belongs with the world in a unique way. For Schleiermacher the traditional onto-theological options for understanding the Infinite can have no descriptive force. He rejects the traditional distinction between God as essence and God as accident. Instead he speaks of God as hidden and God as revealed. That 'aspect' of God which is revealed can, however, be discussed.

For Schleiermacher the Infinite is not to be equated with the sum total of what is. To do so would deny God's power over and in the world. Hence strict pantheism is rejected. Nor is the Infinite to be understood as standing outside of creation. To do so would deny the unifying power of the Infinite within the world structure. Hence theism is rejected. As we shall see Schleiermacher develops a third option which we shall designate by the term "panentheism". But of this later. What we must now exhibit is the noetic side of this second stage of self-consciousness.

The first diremption to be found within the noetic structure is that between an abiding-in-self and a passing-beyond-self. These reciprocally active modes of subjectivity are constituted respectively by feeling and knowing on the one hand and doing on the other. However, knowing cannot remain a simple abiding-in-self. It must become actualized by passing-beyond-self. That is to say that knowing must be an intentional act with a given noematic content. Doing, as always passing-beyond-self, and knowing as actualized in passing-beyond-self are active and creative modes of subjectivity. Feeling, in contrast, is and remains an abiding-in-self. As such it is receptive. And as the constitutive structure of abiding-in-self it grounds subjectivity. Hence, for Schleiermacher, feeling is prior to knowing and doing, yet neither knowing or doing is in any sense dispensable. These three modes (moments) of subjectivity achieve their unity through their reciprocity. As reciprocally co-implicated they develop out of each other thereby enriching the scope of subjectivity. Feeling, however, is that mode of subjectivity which gives to us the immediacy of self-consciousness.

Immediate self-consciousness is quite distinct from any mediated image of the self. As prior to the mediated stage immediate self-consciousness is that which makes subjectivity possible. Here we are of course reminded of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception as that which enables the self to be as a concrete synthesis. Yet Schleiermacher does not rest content with speaking of feelings per se. He isolates one specific feeling and elevates it above the others. This is, of course, the feeling of piety.

Piety is the distinctly religious feeling which stands, by definition, in relation to the Infinite. While other feelings attach themselves to this or that region of the finite, piety reaches beyond all finite determinations. By doing so it comes to rest in the light of the Infinite. Yet while piety, qua feeling, is an abiding-in-self (as receptive) it is also connected with the knowing and doing. In fact, if it failed to connect with knowing and doing it would be an empty piety.

Piety, in order to be actual, must become active in a concrete faith community of actions and knowledge.

At this point we are ready to deepen our understanding of sensible self-consciousness and prepare for the next sublation.

In every self-consciousness two elements are experienced. This first is the self-caused element. This is experienced as a feeling of freedom. This feeling of freedom is related to activity and is reflexive--that is, it expresses the existence of the self for and to itself. It is spontaneous and creative activity which directs itself outward into historical space. This feeling of freedom is related to the person's inner sense of unity. Concerning this relationship Scott states:

"Man's primordial awareness of his unity and his unifying action is named the feeling of freedom by Schleiermacher, the feeling given with consciousness as one acts on and interrelates with what he finds. This feeling is the basis for one's specific consciousness of his own capacity to initiate, select, and create. The feeling is given in the sense that it does not rely on any particular set of ideas, but accompanies human activity in all cases."³

If the feeling of freedom were to exist alone within the self it would degenerate into mere "agility" and free-play of forms. Schleiermacher accused some of the Romantics of this one-sided emphasis on freedom. However, feeling is conditioned by another element within self-consciousness. This element is the non-self-caused element. This second element is characterized as the feeling of dependence. This receptive mode of self-consciousness is other directed. Yet it is other directed not in the sense of going out toward the other but in the deeper sense of receiving the other into its abiding-in-self. As receptive it is conditioned and in-formed by otherness. Through this receptive abiding the other comes to abide in self-consciousness.

Neither the self-caused element nor the non-self caused element can exist alone. They reciprocally co-determine each other within the finite subject. Neither freedom nor dependence is absolute. As so limited they ensure the finitude of the self (remembering that with Hegel's choice of freedom over against dependence we witness the infinitude of the self). Yet freedom and dependence do not fuse together. Only through their bi-polar reciprocity do they remain functional.

Yet a fundamental difference now begins to emerge at this stage of the evolution of self-consciousness. The non-self-caused element assumes priority. The feeling of dependence, as receptive, is experienced as the deepest layer of self-consciousness. At this point Schleiermacher differs radically from his fellow post-Kantians such as Fichte and Hegel. Both Fichte and Hegel strove to found the self on the principle of a free and productive (self-positing) spiritual act. With Schleiermacher the tables are turned and the emphasis falls on a prior sense of dependence. All free acts derive their possibility and meaning from dependence.

The feeling of dependence is now seen as a feeling of absolute dependence. However, as Neibuhr rightly points out, this actually means simple or sheer dependence (thereby avoiding Hegelian overtones). Sheer

dependence is dependence in the face of the non-finite. As such the subject, in the mode of sheer dependence, has no specific referent or

Scott expresses this difference as follows:

"Hence, Schleiermacher can say descriptively that the feeling of absolute dependence is 'in itself a co-existence of God in self-consciousness', but that insight presupposes that one has recognized the existence of the feeling and come to terms with it in a specificable, conditioned way. As Schleiermacher pointed out to Dr. Lucke, consciousness of God is not God himself, but is man's consciousness of God's presence to man. This feeling which arises because of this presence is itself neither the presence of God nor a religious state of mind."⁴

With the emergence of this sheer dependence the next stage of self-consciousness unfolds. This is higher self-consciousness which does not cancel-out sensible self-consciousness but reciprocally enriches and deepens it. Thus in the highest phase of the evolution of the self the second stage is preserved. The lowest stage of animal self-consciousness is preserved in a derivative way as a reminder of the self's primal "whence".

Yet self-consciousness must act on the feeling of sheer dependence if it is to be of value to the subject. When this occurs the Infinite enters into self-consciousness. The Infinite then assumes the function of unifying the finite determinations of the subject. Concerning this experience of the togetherness of the self Schleiermacher states:

"Finally, not only is the feeling of absolute dependence in itself a co-existence of God in the self-consciousness, but the totality of being from which, according to the position of the subject, all determinations of the self-consciousness proceed, is comprehended under that feeling of dependence; and therefore all modifications of the higher self-consciousness may also be represented by our describing God as the basis of this togetherness of being in its various distributions."⁵

Thus we can say with Schleiermacher that while we do not become the Infinite we are unified around 'its' presence. Yet in no sense is finitude thereby cancelled-out. Finite self-consciousness remains conditioned by history, language, community, and its unique individuality. The non-conditioned Infinite serves as the still-point through which pious finitude is unified in its receptivity. All finite determinations and activities become in-fused and in-formed with the "loving" and "creative" power which forms their "whence". This "whence" is the ground which nurtures and binds the finite self. As such an enabling ground the "whence" allows the higher humanity to flower in history.

The historical cipher of the higher humanity is the Christ who, as redeemer, stands into the Infinite in a fully transparent way (cf. Tillich). Christ is the paradigm of perfect God-consciousness. As such he assembles the community around himself. In the Speeches God-consciousness was possible without the Christ. In The Christian Faith the Christ becomes a necessary element in the God/man relationship. Thus for the latter Schleiermacher finite subjectivity must pass through the reality of the Christ in order to experience the presence of the Infinite. Concerning this turn to Christocentricity Scott states:

"Schleiermacher wanted to illumine the nature of God's presence through Christian self-consciousness. This self-consciousness originates historically in Jesus of Nazareth and the community of believers, because Jesus was perfectly attuned to the presence of God, the same God upon whom man depends absolutely. The difference between Jesus and other men is that Jesus was perfectly obedient to God's presence. Hence his entire consciousness became transparent to God, and the world and society were seen without distortion in the light of God's necessary presence."⁶

This movement from the non-Christocentric doctrine of the Speeches to the later Christocentric emphasis was facilitated by Schleiermacher's study of Plato in the period around 1805. In the 1805 work, Christmas Eve: Dialogue on the Incarnation, Schleiermacher oscillates between the Platonic notion of "participation" and the Christian notion of "Incarnation". It is clear that Schleiermacher is torn between his earlier experience of the presence of the Infinite in everything finite (derived from Spinoza via Goethe), and his Christian experience of the unique Incarnation of the Infinite in the Christ. In the former case we witness an ontology of mediation expressed in one concrete epiphany (showing forth). For the Spinozistic Romantic every finite object or event serves as an expression of the Infinite ("everything is miracle"). For the Christian pietist, on the other hand, the Word made Flesh in the unique person of Jesus is the source and goal of religious life. This is expressed in the Christmas Eve by the character Eduard who, guided by the Gospel of John states:

"He is the Son of Man without qualification. Until he enters history, all else is presage; all human life is related to his life, and only through this relation does it partake of goodness and divinity."⁷

Thus the finite can only participate in the Infinite through the Incarnation. This ontology of mediation gradually comes to surpass the earlier generic inclusiveness. However, panentheism is never rejected, rather, it is modified by the centrality of the Christ event. The importance of Plato for the young Schleiermacher is in helping him to go beyond the Spinozistic doctrine of the Speeches. With Plato's statement of the nature of "participation" Schleiermacher derives the conceptual tools necessary for the move to Christocentricity. Plato's dualisms are retained (against the earlier form of an identity philosophy) while Plato's answer is rejected. Schleiermacher states the nature of this dualism and its overcoming through the statements of Ernst:

"By contrast (to Christ), we ourselves begin with the cleavage between time and eternity, appearance and being; and we only attain to harmony through redemption, which is nothing other than the overcoming of these oppositions and which on this account can only proceed from one for whom they have not had to be overcome."⁸

Platonic dualism is conquered by the perfect God-man who stands in an immediate relationship to the Infinite. For Schleiermacher, Christ's participation in the realm beyond appearance and time is the Christian counterpart to the Platonic theme of the ascent toward the Good. And where Socrates speaks of the possibility of this ascent Schleiermacher's Christ attests to its actual attainment.

However, for persons other than the Christ, finitude and radical autonomy cannot be overcome. The Infinite is not fully transparent to the rest of humanity. Thus we need the Christ event to assure us of our proper homecoming in the Infinite.

Yet this is not the whole of our story. While we have isolated the three stages in the evolution of consciousness (completed through the Christ event) we have failed to exhibit how these stages related to each other. When these relations have been described we will have finished our analysis of the phenomenology of consciousness.

The first level of consciousness, namely, animal consciousness, drops away when middle consciousness is attained. As it exists prior to the subject/object diremption it cannot be integrated into a consciousness which depends on this diremption. However, an atavistic memory of this identity condition is retained by middle consciousness and it remains a temptation and threat. This feeling of "original unity" remains in the background of middle consciousness.

Middle consciousness lives within the subject/object diremption. With the emergence of this diremption comes the experience of the world as a closed totality which stands over against the finite knower. The middle consciousness finds itself firmly placed within this totality which is comprised of both matter and history. For Schleiermacher, the disciplines of Ethics and Physics help the middle consciousness to orient itself within the world structure. Hermeneutics serves to open-out previous historical horizons. These horizons represent the cultural deposits of the communities of middle consciousness. Thus hermeneutics is used by middle consciousness to place itself within the horizons of history.

Yet middle consciousness cannot remain content with a mere interaction with a material and historical world. Soon it finds that a light breaks through the world which speaks of something which remains unconditioned by the intentional acts of middle consciousness. This light is that side of the Infinite which is turned toward middle consciousness.

With the emergence of the light of the Infinite comes the emergence of higher consciousness. The two must emerge together. In their twin-flowering lies the final stage in the evolution of self-consciousness through time. The Infinite is present to the subject through piety. This receptive piety shows the sheer dependency of higher consciousness. Hence higher consciousness is actually dependent consciousness. It is a mirror upon which the Infinite shines.

Yet with the emergence of the Infinite within higher consciousness we do not witness the death of middle consciousness. It is preserved. Higher consciousness cannot exist without middle consciousness. The Infinite needs the arena of middle consciousness in order to become historically actual. Middle consciousness preserves the world-relationship and the necessary subject/object diremption.

Higher consciousness is thus brought into reciprocal relationship with middle consciousness. Neither can cancel out the other. Working together they serve to concretize the scope of the Infinite within history. Middle consciousness needs higher consciousness in order to

achieve unity. Higher consciousness needs middle consciousness in order to have a finite 'place' in which to shine for the community of piety.

Thus the final stage in the evolution of self-consciousness is one in which higher and middle consciousness co-condition each other. The sheer dependence of higher consciousness grounds the reciprocity between freedom and dependence in middle consciousness. Religious consciousness must exist within this bi-polarity. Thus religious consciousness has as its intentional objects both the world (as matter and history) and the Infinite. With his analysis of the religious consciousness Schleiermacher brings his phenomenology to completion.

DIVISION TWO: THE GENERAL ONTOLOGY

The first, and perhaps most important, statement of Schleiermacher's ontology is to be found in the Speeches. Within the body of the text the second speech, entitled, The Nature of Religion, assumes priority. Our task will consist of analyzing this text from three directions. In the first we will examine the notion of the Infinite. In the second we will examine the notion of the world. Finally, in the third, we will examine the understanding of the Infinite/world relationship(s). In order to complete this third stage we will by necessity concern ourselves with his notions of the Christ and the Spirit. By doing so it is to be hoped that his general ontology will have emerged in its full scope and structure.

Schleiermacher uses a number of terms to denote that non-objective reality which religion calls God. Chief among these terms are: the All, the Whole, the Universe, and the Infinite. We can assume that these terms all have an equivalent meaning.

The Infinite is seen as being distinct from the world. Thus while Schleiermacher like many of his generation, shows the impress of Spinoza he does not feel at home with his pantheism. Pantheism makes the claim that "whatever is, in whatever way it is, is God". There can remain no reality beyond the sum total of entities and events. Hence for pantheism the world is the Infinite. But Schleiermacher takes pains to distinguish the Infinite from the sum total of beings and events.

The distinction which he preserves is expressed by the difference between the terms "in" and "as". If the Infinite is seen "as" the world we have pantheism. If the Infinite is seen as being manifest "in" the world we have panentheism. The panentheism would assert that, "whatever is, in whatever way it is, is to be found in the Infinite." From this assertion it does not follow that the Infinite is exhausted by the totality of beings and events. Concerning this Schleiermacher states:

"The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal."¹⁰

Thus we can see that pantheism is rejected. The Infinite is somehow removed from the finite. By being so removed it can act through the

finite as its "whence". Hence a weak form of dualism is maintained. Yet the point is a subtle one. The Infinite must not be seen as a reality which somehow swoops-down into the finite from a sphere outside of it. It is in fact intimately bound-up with the world as a protean and fecund ground. This active presence ensures the enrichment (fulfillment) of reality. Thus any dualism found in this early text is conditioned by an equally strong sense of identity.

This modification (from the side of identity) prevents Schleiermacher from opting for orthodox theism. Theism would assert that the Infinite is qualitatively distinct from the finite (Barth) and as such cannot be part of an identity bond. Schleiermacher thus steers a precarious path between two extremes. He avoids a Spinozistic identity philosophy while also avoiding a Kantian dualism. He differs from Kant by insisting that the Infinite is phenomenally present to finite subjectivity. And its presence is not a mere idea of Reason but a fully active power (whence).

Yet the Infinite, even though present to the finite subject, is not something which is directly known. Schleiermacher thus retains a Kantian dualism between the reality as it is in itself and that reality as is known to the finite self. We postulate the existence of God while yet failing to know it. Concerning this dualism Niebuhr states:

"God is the transcendent unity of being and knowing that all thinking presupposes, but can never grasp in idea or in judgment. God is the transcendent unity, present in consciousness through faith or conscience, that all ethical action depends upon but can never represent or actualize. God is the impulse, in a word, of human activity, whom we as thinking and desiring beings must postulate but cannot reach."¹¹

The Infinite is thus postulated as both the source (whence) and goal of unity. This postulation involves Schleiermacher in a Kantian type transcendent argument, namely, an argument which proceeds from a given to a necessary but unknown ground. This enabling ground for human unity is the postulated Infinity. Thus, like Kant, Schleiermacher insists that the Infinite-in-itself is unknowable. What is known is its presence to the finite subject. Hence we can speak of the phenomenal mode of the Infinite. Yet Schleiermacher is un-Kantian when he insists on the radical immanence of the Infinite in history and the world. The Infinite is not only immanent but it further serves to bind-together human selves. All individual experiences as well are given unity by the immanence of the Infinite. Concerning this Sykes states:

"In the content of man's awareness of God is necessarily involved the understanding that he unifies for us all our ambivalent relationships with things and people. He gives purpose to our life in the sense in which we can understand it as contact into ourselves whatever we perceive, whoever we meet, and whatever happens to us, as perfectly harmonious with our own beings. God is himself this principle of harmony and unity. He is waiting, immanent; to be religious means to be open to Him and to perceive Him all about one."¹²

While the Infinite has no traits (other than "love") it does have specific functions within the life of finite subjectivity. As the ground (whence) of reality it provides the unity which is manifest in

both the world and in human subjects. The Infinite is ever active in ensuring this unity. For Schleiermacher it is far more than the sum total of entities and events. It is the non-finite. Thus we can say that the Infinite is a non-finite power which is responsible for unity. Yet we do not see the agent behind this unifying power. From the effects we postulate an agent. Any attempt to seize the Infinite conceptually remains anthropomorphic (a general principle of Pietistic agnosticism).

But we are not left with a cold and totally hidden other. The Infinite speaks to the subject through love and grace. Its agency is felt within consciousness. Further, its agency is felt within the bi-polar structure of the world. What then is "world" for Schleiermacher?

The world is both a felt unity and multiplicity. Hence the world is unlike the Infinite which remains a unity beyond multiplicity. By multiplicity we mean "individuated" and "conditioned". The unitary aspect of this conditioned multiplicity is made possible by the Infinite which acts as Logos. This unitary aspect insures the constancy of the world's dynamics and structure. Without the power of the Infinite the world would cease to be a cosmos and fall into chaos. Thus the world is an ordered cosmos.

Yet this order, this unity, is not static. The world is the battleground of two forces, namely, activity and passivity. These forces exist in a bi-polar antagonism. Neither can exist alone. For Schleiermacher these forces are real in themselves. They are not Ideas of Reason but active presences. The world itself is fully spatial and temporal. Kant's transcendental derivation of space and time is firmly rejected. Schleiermacher thus sides with the pre-Kantian Realist tradition. Concerning this Ueberweg states:

"Space and time are viewed by Schleiermacher as forms of the existence of things themselves and not merely of our apprehension of things. In like manner Schleiermacher concedes to the categories validity for things themselves....The plurality of co-existing objects and of successive processes in nature and mind constitutes a unity which is not invented by the mind, but has true reality, and includes object and subject."¹³

Thus while Schleiermacher affirms the phenomenal/noumenal distinction in dealing with the Infinite he rejects it when dealing with the world. This places him mid-way between Kant, who affirmed the distinction throughout, and Hegel who rejected the value of this distinction in any realm.

The world, for Schleiermacher, is thus a knowable and finite reality. Its real structures can be isolated and named. Physics has the responsibility of ordering, via mathematics, these events into a conceptual whole. Ethics has the task of understanding both culture and history. Both Physics and Ethics strive to grasp their material as a whole and as a totality. As such these disciplines encompass the world. Thus the world is knowable in a way that the Infinite is not. As such it is the object of science in its various forms.

Thus we can now assert that the world, for Schleiermacher, is a knowable whole which exists as a multiplicity through the twin forces of passi-

vity and activity. Activity and passivity co-condition all beings and events.

We have dealt in turn with the Infinite and the world. At this point we must raise the crucial and difficult question as to their inter-relationship(s). In order to understand this inter-relationship(s) we must study the nature of the agency of the Infinite and the nature of the mediator. This will require a brief study of the notion of the middle. When this middle has emerged we will have brought our study of the general ontology to a close.

The Infinite, as the unity beyond multiplicity, is the agent through which binding takes place. This agency is a conditioning which is felt in all beings and events. In the Explanations, added later to the body of the Speeches Schleiermacher makes the following statement:

"We do not feel ourselves dependent on the Whole insofar as it is an aggregate of mutually conditioned parts of which we ourselves are one, but only insofar as underneath this coherence there is a unity conditioning all things and conditioning our relations to the other parts of the Whole. Only on this condition can the single thing be, as it is here put, an exhibition of the Infinite, being so comprehended that its opposition to all else entirely vanishes."¹⁴

Of special concern here is the last sentence. Schleiermacher makes the statement that the individual thing, and by implication the world, is a cipher of the Infinite. As a cipher (and here we think of Jaspers) it points toward that which conditions it. But to point is actually to belong-with that toward which one points. Hence the thing, qua finite, belongs-with the Infinite. Ciphers belong to their ground. This ground is the conditioning ground. Hence the world itself, as a multiplicity of things, belongs-with the Infinite which conditions it. The world is the 'whither' which emerges from the primal 'whence'. Yet the Infinite is not only the felt whence of the world but its constant conditioning ground. The Infinite's agency is not a mere past event (creation) but an eternal action which operates in the world through the twin forces of passivity and activity. The relationship between conditioned (whither) and conditioner (whence) is maintained by the cipher function of things. By pointing toward the conditioning ground the thing preserves the link with its source. A cipher is that which is empty and that which points. Thus we can say that the thing, qua cipher, empties itself into the Infinite in the act of pointing toward it. With this kenosis of things we see Schleiermacher's implicit Neo-Platonism. The world is an emanation from the primal whence. Religious consciousness functions to reverse the direction of emanation and return the 'whither' back to its 'whence'.

Yet not only things point to the whence. Persons can stand in a cipher relationship as well. This is made possible by the above mentioned religious consciousness. Religious consciousness preserves the linkage between the Infinite and the world of multiplicity. Yet it cannot do so in isolation. Only in a community of piety will consciousness become fully religious. This community produces a bond of empathy between the individual and the felt whence. Concerning this Schleiermacher states:

"Your Ego, being multiplied and more clearly outlined, is in all its smallest and swiftest changes immortalized in the manifestations of

human nature. As soon as this is seen, you can love yourselves with a pure and blameless love. Humility, that never forsakes you, has its counterpart in the feeling that the whole of humanity lives and works in you. Every contrition is sweetened to joyful self-sufficiency. This is the completion of religion on this side. It works its way back to the heart, and there finds the Infinite. The man in whom this is accomplished, is no more in need of a mediator for any sort of intuition of humanity. Rather he is himself a mediator for many."¹⁵

With the concrete intuition of the Infinite the individual enters into the role of the mediator. The mediator is that person who feels the pull of the conditioning ground (his whence). By feeling this pull, this draft (Heidegger), he is able to stand into the cipher role. To mediate is to be a cipher which points in two directions. In one direction the cipher points toward the conditioning ground while in the in all beings and events. In the Explanations, added later to the body of the Speeches Schleiermacher makes the following statement: other direction it points to the community of finite subjects. For the early Schleiermacher any individual can serve as a mediator for the community of persons. For the later Schleiermacher (after 1800) Christ, because of his perfect God-consciousness, becomes the sole mediator. Yet in both the early and late systems a mediator is necessary.

The mediator helps to hold the bond between the Infinite and the world (finite) in place. He represents the center of this relationship. Hence he has an ontological role to play.

As noted, the role of mediation becomes localized in the later writings. Jesus as the Christ serves as the soul divine/world link. He is aided, however, by the ever active Spirit. The Spirit works through the community of piety as the fecundating ground of empathy. Spirit makes community possible. It mediates among the pious. As such it holds them into a belonging through history.

Yet if the Infinite is understood to be undivided and unconditioned, from whence comes the Trinity? How do Christ and the Spirit enter into history in order to serve as links to the Infinite? And finally, what is their role in the Infinite/world relationship?

The Spirit and the Christ emerge from the nexus where the Infinite meets finite self-consciousness. This nexus is the fiery point of contact between the two dimensions. The first dimension is the unified Infinite whereas the second dimension is finite self-consciousness in search of unity. The nexus of the two dimensions produces the Trinity. How is this possible?

Schleiermacher insists that monism is superior to polytheism. Hence his understanding of the Trinity must exclude any traits found in polytheism. It does so by concentrating on the nexus between man and God. From the pervuew of this nexus God is not Himself three but is three only for finite self-consciousness. God is splintered into Son and Spirit by the determinations of finite mind. This splintering is the result of the subject's inability to en-vision the Infinite in itself. Yet this failure becomes a triumph in that with this splintering the Infinite can now assume a human shape within history.

Christ and the Spirit enter into history at a specific moment. Christ becomes the redeemer in and through Jesus the historical being. In a sense, Jesus negates himself in order to assume the ontological role of the mediator. From the moment of the flowering of his perfect God-consciousness the Infinite/world link is established. His God-consciousness is the ontological bond between the two dimensions. This bond is unique and historical.

Yet the bond needs to be nurtured. The Spirit enters into history in order to keep the bond active in the community of piety. It serves to enshrine this bond within the concrete church. In doing so it ensures that the Infinite's light will never dim. The light is kept open as light by the Spirit's agency. Hence the Spirit too is a mediator. Yet Spirit is a mediator of a different order. Christ still retains priority in the Infinite/world link. The Spirit can be seen as the agency of Christ's perfect God-consciousness within history. We can say that the Christ was a specific event in time whereas Spirit is His agency through time.

This brings us to our last question, namely, the role of the mediator(s) in bringing the two dimensions together.

The mediator stands in the middle. This much is obvious. Yet what does it mean to be in the middle? It means that one gathers-into-belonging that which is separate. This gathering is only possible at the nexus. The nexus is the cross-point where the two dimensions meet. The Infinite and the world it conditions are held together by the mediator who stands at the nexus. From the nexus flowers the bond of belonging. Thus the middle is the 'place' where belonging is enshrined.

With the discovery of the nexus Schleiermacher could bring his general ontology to completion. He had isolated the still/fiery point where the Infinite and the world are brought into belonging. As he matured in his thinking he reflected more deeply into the nature of the mediator and the nexus. From his early Romantic panentheism he moved to a fully Christocentric view. By seeing the Christ as the soul mediator he moved beyond a Spinozistic identity philosophy. His ontology is thus Christian rather than Romantic because he placed his greatest concern on the mediator at the nexus. Buried deep within the nexus he found Christ and His agent Spirit. With this discovery he completed his vision.

Now that we have dealt in turn with his phenomenology of consciousness and his general ontology we are in a position to find the internal links that hold them together. We will do this by witnessing how the stages of self-consciousness co-emerge with their attendant ontotheological frames. When this co-emergence has been exhibited we will have deepened our understanding of Schleiermacher's system.

DIVISION THREE: THE INTERNAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE GENERAL ONTOLOGY

In the first division we isolated three stages in the evolution of self-consciousness. While doing so we made references to the co-emergent ontotheological frames which corresponded to these stages. Our task in this final section is to make this co-emergence explicit.

The first stage in the evolution of the self is that of animal self-consciousness. We characterized this stage as being little more than the 'location' of sensation. Indeed, it makes little sense to speak of a self at all. We can only speak of the totality which exists before the subject/object diremption. In this world there is no onlooker and no looked-upon (no noesis or noema). We only witness the dim and mute drama of the play of sensations. There is no sense in which we can speak of an ordered cosmos. What we do have is phenomenal chaos. Yet this chaos is not seen as chaos as there is no one to see it.

Animal self-consciousness exists in a state of pure immediacy. As such there can be no world. World only emerges when the subject/object diremption takes place. With this diremption animal self-consciousness is left behind (except a memory). Thus we cannot describe what the world of this lowest consciousness might be like. For animal self-consciousness no ontology is even possible. Yet in saying this we have made a contribution to knowledge. Animal consciousness has no world (intentional horizon). To understand this is to grasp the dark matrix out of which higher consciousness must emerge. We can see animal self-consciousness as the "whence" of middle and higher self-consciousness.

Middle consciousness emerges with the subject/object split. From this split emerges both an ontology and a theology. The ontology concerns itself with the structure and dynamics of the world of multiplicity. For middle consciousness unity is only sensed as from afar. The abiding reality is that of fragmentation and the strife of twin forces.

The world that emerges for middle consciousness is a world of discrete and knowable beings and forces. The relationship which middle consciousness has with this world is no longer one of immediacy. The world is the multiplicity which stands over against it. As such it is alien and remote. It consists of ontologically real beings/events which stand within a stable space-time grid.

The theology which animates middle consciousness (sensible self-consciousness and here we are reading between the lines, is that of polytheism. Polytheism asserts that numerous divine beings and powers exist, no one of which is primary. For middle consciousness there is no unity behind these beings and powers. Whatever unity is sensed is still far off and only emerges with higher self-consciousness.

Polytheism represents an advance over fetishism which remains tied to specific locales and events (ritual or cultic). It is possible, although this claim would take us far beyond the text, that fetishism represents the type of mute identity bond (immediacy) found in animal self-consciousness. In any event polytheism represents a liberation from the confines of specific locales. Concerning the nature of polytheism Schleiermacher states:

"Indeed, the main reason why people remain at this level is that the sense of totality has not yet developed....Polytheism proper is present only when the local references quite disappear, and the gods, spiritually defined, form an organized and coherent plurality, which, if not exhibited as a totality, is nevertheless presupposed and striven after as such."16

Thus the theology proper to middle consciousness is one which posits many non-localized gods. As stated above, the ontology animating this level of consciousness is one which posits a world-multiplicity. Unity is sensed behind both the world and the many gods. Yet this unity has as yet failed to emerge. Its emergence is only possible when middle consciousness is linked to higher consciousness.

Higher consciousness is characterized as that consciousness which is open to the Infinite. It becomes so open through the feeling of piety which itself rests upon sheer dependence. Christ, in the later writings, represents perfect dependence and as such is pure higher consciousness. Whether Christ can exist without also being a middle consciousness has been much debated (cf. Scott). This will not be our concern. What we are concerned with is the ontology and theology proper to higher consciousness.

Middle consciousness saw the world as a multiplicity. Higher consciousness sees it as a totality. This totality is made possible by the Infinite. Hence we can say that higher consciousness is concerned with the Infinite. The ontology proper to higher consciousness is thus one which preserves the Infinite as Infinite, namely, as un-conditioned by finite traits. This ontology is a negative ontology in that it refuses to specify the 'what' of the Infinite. It will specify the 'how' of the Infinite's agency. But in doing so it never talks of the agent itself.

The theology proper to higher consciousness is Monotheism. As stated above Monotheism is neither pantheism nor theism. It represents a subtle form of panentheism. This Monotheistic understanding of the Infinite emerges when the sense of unity and totality emerges from behind the many gods of polytheism. Concerning this emergence Schleiermacher states:

"The more, then, any single one of these Beings is related to the whole system of them, and this system, in turn, to the whole of existence as it appears in consciousness, the more definitely is the dependence of everything finite, not indeed on a Highest One, but on this highest totality, expressed in the religious self-consciousness. But in this state of religious faith there cannot fail to be here and there at least a presentiment of One Supreme Being behind the plurality of higher Beings; and then Polytheism is already beginning to disappear, and the way to Monotheism is open."¹⁷

With the full emergence of Monotheism we witness the completion of the evolution of self-consciousness in time. For Schleiermacher the highest form of Monotheism is, of course, Christianity. In the early writings he was content to speak of religion per se. In the later writings positive Christianity preempts the field. Yet higher consciousness must retain its bond with middle consciousness. Only Christ can remain purely dependent upon the Infinite. For persons other than the Christ middle consciousness must remain. Thus at the final stage of our journey we witness the bond between higher and middle consciousness. The ontology of this bonded consciousness combines that of both partners. The world is both a multiplicity and a unified totality. The theology of this bonded consciousness is that on only one of the partners, namely, higher consciousness. Polytheism is left behind and

Monotheism assumes its place. Thus at the end of our long journey we arrive at a consciousness which involves both unity and multiplicity, the Infinite and the world. Yet the center of this consciousness remains the ever felt and ever hidden Infinite.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Schleiermacher, Friedrich, The Christian Faith, trans. by H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1928), pg. 19.
- 2 Ueberweg, Friedrich, History of Philosophy, trans. by G. Morris, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1873), Vol. 2, pg. 244.
- 3 Scott, Charles E., "Schleiermacher and the Problem of Divine Immediacy," in Religious Studies, Vol. 3, 1968, pg. 503.
- 4 Ibid, pg. 505.
- 5 The Christian Faith, pg. 126.
- 6 Scott, pp. 507-8.
- 7 Schleiermacher, Friedrich, Christmas Eve: Dialogue on the Incarnation, trans. by Terrence N. Tice, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), pg. 84.
- 8 Ibid, pg. 79.
- 9 Schleiermacher, Friedrich, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, trans. by J. Oman, (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pg. 39.
- 10 Ibid, pg. 36.
- 11 Niebuhr, Richard R., "Schleiermacher and the Names of God," from Schleiermacher as Contemporary, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pg. 180.
- 12 Sykes, Stephen, Friedrich Schleiermacher, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971), pg. 26.
- 13 Ueberweg, pg. 244.
- 14 Speeches, pg. 106.
- 15 Ibid, pg. 79.
- 16 The Christian Faith, pg. 34.
- 17 Ibid, pp. 34-5.