

Chapter 7

Romantic Redirection

The French Revolution finally translated the individualistic notions in the humanistic theory of natural law into political reality. However, the Revolution was soon followed by the great reaction of the Restoration period. The Restoration period initiated a new spiritual upheaval within the humanistic worldview. It was a time of ferment and spiritual confusion in which many again dreamed of a synthesis between Christianity and humanism, as in our own postwar period. But in actual reality humanism maintained the absolute spiritual leadership in western culture.

The New Personality Ideal

The religious turn within humanism's worldview occurred from out of its deepest dynamic; namely, the freedom motive of the personality ideal. During the Restoration period the personality ideal began to emancipate itself from the influences of the classical nature motive and its mechanistic world picture. The personality ideal acquired a new and irrational form which assimilated and reinterpreted many familiar Christian motives in a humanistic fashion. Even prominent Christian thinkers and statesmen, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, were misled by this and mistook the new spiritual movement as a dependable ally in their fundamental battle against the revolutionary principles. We shall attempt to sketch this new spiritual movement within humanism in terms of the inner dialectic of humanism's own ground-motive. [175]

As we saw earlier, Kant had confined the classical ideal of science and its mechanistic view of nature to the area of sensorily perceptible phenomena. But within this limited realm of "nature" he had completely accepted the science ideal. In his conception, "nature" and "freedom" were separated from each other by an unbridgeable gap, though he granted religious priority to the freedom motive. However, even in Kant's view of the freedom and autonomy of human personality, one can clearly detect the influence of the natural-scientific attitude of the Enlightenment. After all, he retained the Enlightenment's *individualistic* and *rationalistic* orientation in his own view of human personality.

In the rationalistic view of nature maintained by the classical science ideal there was no place for a proper recognition of the *true individuality of things*. After all, irreducible individuality did not fit a view of nature in which all complex phenomena are dissolved into their simplest and colorless “elements” and wholly determined by universal laws of nature. In this view a particular phenomenon can be reduced to a specific instance that exemplifies the validity of a universal law or rule.

In Kant’s conception of human personality one can still detect this type of rationalism. In his characterization of the autonomy of human personality, the true human *autos* (the selfhood or the ego) is known only by means of the universal form of the moral law (the *nomos*). Kant’s rigorous ethics of law left no room for recognizing the value of *individual* disposition. With respect to the universal, moral law, all people are merely indistinct “individuals” who lack real individuality.

Conversely, this rationalistic and individualistic view of the personality ideal did not grant the true idea of *community* its rightful place. Kant shared with the entire Enlightenment the individualistic view of society produced by the overextension of the natural-scientific way of thinking. For him the state is an aggregate of individuals joined together under general legal rules of conduct by means of a social contract. For him even marriage is not a true community. He viewed it merely as a contract between two individuals of different sex for the mutual and lasting possession of each other’s bodies.

Romanticism and the “Storm and Stress” [*Sturm und Drang*] movement bitterly opposed this rationalistic and individualistic view of the personality ideal. For Romanticism the motive of freedom demanded a different understanding of personality. Kant’s “bourgeois morality” was ridiculed already in the early years of the Romantic era. The Romantics did not wish to interpret the autonomy of the person in such a way that the human *autos*, the true self, would lose itself in the *nomos*, the universal moral law. On the contrary, for them the *nomos*, the rule for human conduct, must find its origin in the full individuality of the *autos*, [176] in one’s individual disposition. Human personality must indeed be a law unto itself! But if this is taken seriously, then the law must be wholly *individual*, in harmony with each person’s disposition and special calling.

Early Romanticism placed this “ethics of genius” over against “bourgeois ethics.” The thesis that general laws are completely opposed to true morality typified the change from a rationalistic to an irrationalistic conception of the autonomous personality. Humanism’s turn to the other extreme, a turn that completely dismissed the validity of binding universal laws, led to dangerously anarchistic consequences, particularly in the area of sexual relationships.

Early Romanticism developed the “morality of genius” especially in an aesthetic direction. For Kant, individuality was just as valid in the realm of art as in the realm of organic life. But Kant did not understand this validity in a scientific way, which is directed at determining *objective* states of affairs in reality. Rather, the claims of the individual with respect to art were made on the grounds of a person’s *subjective* power of judgment which cannot claim to grasp reality objectively but makes judgments only on the basis of the subjective impressions of a purposeful arrangement nature makes on one’s faculty of judgment. Only in relation to this restriction did Kant treat the genius of the artist and did he speak of the impression of the “harmonious relation between nature and freedom” which the work of art makes on one’s aesthetic faculty of judgment.

Romanticism made this conception of the work of art its starting point and transferred it to its “ethics of genius.” For instance, the sexual surrender of a woman to a man out of spontaneous love – quite apart from the civil bond of marriage – was glorified as aesthetic harmony between “sensuous nature” and “spiritual freedom.” Friedrich Schlegel’s romance, *Lucinde*, glorified this kind of “free love” which is guided only by the harmony of the sensual and spiritual inclinations of the individual man and woman.¹ Johann Fichte [1762-1814] also defended this “free love” in one period of his thought.

The Romantic glorification of sexual love was characteristic of a new type of individualism which arose as a result of a shift from rationalism to irrationalism. Romanticism summoned its adherents to express this subjective, individual inclination in an aesthetic harmony between sensual *nature* and spiritual *freedom* in total disregard for the general rules of ethics established to guide the spiritless “masses.” [177]

In order to escape the anarchistic implications of its new personality ideal, irrationalistic Romanticism needed to discover *limits* for the individual freedom of the autonomous personality. But such limits could of course not be sought in a universally valid moral law. They could only be found by viewing the individual person as a member of an all-embracing *community* which itself possesses a uniquely individual disposition and personality. The rationalistic conception of the person as a nondescript individual – a conception in which only the *general idea* of freedom and autonomy demanded practical realization – had to yield to an irrationalistic conception of the free personality as a wholly individual member of *the spiritual community of humankind* which differentiates itself in a variety of individual *partial* communities such as the peoples and nations of the world.

¹ *Friedrich von Schlegel’s Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. with an intro. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971). *Lucinde* was first published in 1799.

It seemed that with this change Romanticism had given the old, abstract, and rationalistic idea of world citizenship a much richer content, filled with individuality. Autonomous and free personality could now express its individual inclination fully. But this individuality of any particular person is co-determined by that person's family, people, and the national community of which she is a member. Romanticism no longer acknowledged the existence of "a universal human being" as a nondescript individual with human rights; it viewed the individual personality only as a member of this individual national whole.

The humanistic personality ideal thus deepened and broadened itself as a *community ideal*. In its irrationalistic turn it simultaneously acquired a universalistic character. Freedom and autonomy were conceived of as the freedom and autonomy of the individual community of persons. This universalism is the ideology of community.

Ideology of Community

We have now become acquainted with the universalistic conception of the humanistic personality ideal. We have seen how Romanticism, which acquired its spiritual influence after the French Revolution, resisted the individualistic understanding of the humanistic freedom motive. That understanding had been influenced by the classical humanistic science ideal, which explicated all complex natural phenomena in terms of their simplest elements in accordance with the natural-scientific method. Human society too was seen in terms of its elementary components. The free, autonomous individual was viewed as this elementary component which thus constituted the point of departure for the modern conception of the law of nature and the natural-law construction of human society. As we saw [178] earlier, this individualistic theory was *rationalistic*; that is, the theory attempted to dissolve what was irrational – namely, the incomprehensible individuality of subjective human life – into rationally intelligible and transparent instances of universal law-conformities. The model and guide for this attempt had been the natural-scientific thought of the day. The classical science ideal sought to accomplish a rational control of "nature" by discovering the general laws that govern phenomena. To this end it was essential that the "components," in terms of which complex phenomena were to be understood, be stripped of any irrational characteristics so that they could be grasped in clear and transparent universal concepts.

Thus the "autonomous individual," in terms of whom complex societal phenomena were constructed, was the *rational* component of all social relations, stripped of all authentic individuality and endowed only with the *universal* faculties of reason and will which were viewed as autonomous and free in accordance with the humanistic freedom motive. This was the

background of the proclamation of the French Revolution: freedom and equality for all human individuals.

In opposition to this individualistic and rationalistic view of the humanistic personality ideal, Romanticism posited its universalistic and irrationalistic conception. For Romanticism the autonomous freedom of the human personality cannot be understood in terms of a universal colorless individual constituted by rational lawful relationships, but rather in terms of the fully individual disposition of a person. In accordance with the humanistic ground-motive, a person's individual and irrational disposition is a law unto itself. The individual and ultimately irrational disposition of a person cannot be grasped in terms of any universal concept of understanding. Yet, in accordance with the humanistic ground-motive, it must be a law unto itself. A genius like Napoleon, for example, cannot be judged in terms of universal standards. The autonomous freedom of humankind requires that genius be understood in a strictly individual sense.

In order to avoid the anarchistic implications of this break with universal laws and norms for judgment, Romanticism needed new ties to restrict the individual personality in some fashion. The limits to the expression of personality were found not in a general law judging all human beings but only in the individual's membership in a higher human community which had a completely individual disposition itself. Romanticism enthroned the national community and its utterly individual, national spirit [*volksgeist*]. This community replaced the indistinct individual of humanistic natural law and of the French Revolution. Abstract individuals, instances of the general concept of "a human being," do not exist. Individual Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Dutchmen do exist; and their individuality is determined by the individual character of the *volk* to which they belong. They share in that character because they have organically [*naturwüchsig*] come forth out of [179] a specific people. The wholly individual character or spirit of a people is also the free and autonomous source of its culture, state, legal system, art, social customs, and moral standards. In other words, moral rules and positive laws valid for societal relationships are the autonomous products of the spirit of an individual people and therefore cannot serve as the normative standards for other peoples which possess a different individual character or disposition. This is thus the irrationalistic and universalistic change in the humanistic freedom motive.

A new *ideology of community* was the immediate result of this change. Romanticism replaced the gospel of the autonomous and nondescript *individual* with the gospel of the autonomous and individual *community*. Both Romanticism and all of post-Kantian "freedom idealism" clung to the idea of a "community of humankind" of which all other communities are individual parts. This idea constituted Romanticism's "idea of human-

ity” or, in Goethe’s words, respect for whatever “bears the human countenance” [*was Menschenantlitz trägt*]. But the community of humankind remained an eternal, supratemporal ideal which manifests itself in temporal society only in individual, national communities.

I trust that by now the intrinsically humanistic origin of this new community ideology is evident. This is a crucial matter since this ideology again poses a dangerous threat in our own day, as it is irreconcilably engaged in a battle against the scriptural ground-motive of creation, fall, and redemption in Jesus Christ.

The community ideology clearly conflicts with the scriptural motive of creation. Those who take the biblical creation motive seriously will never be guided by the idea of an autonomous national spirit which in its absolute individuality is its own law and standard. They will never view a *temporal* community as the totality of all human relationships of which the other societal spheres are merely dependent parts. On the contrary, they will accept the sovereignty of these spheres, all of which have a distinct character of their own because of their created inner nature. They will never attempt to reduce the horizontal societal interlinkages [*maatschapsbetrekkingen*; coordinational relationships] between distinct communities or between individual persons in their coordinate relations to communal bonds. In other words, they will be on guard against any overextension or absolutization of a temporal community at the expense of societal relations which, because of their inherent nature, are noncommunal in nature. In short, whoever takes the biblical creation motive seriously will never be able to accept the dilemma between individualism and universalism, the exaltation of either the “autarkic individual” or the “autonomous community.” [180]

For some it is difficult to understand that universalism, with its community ideology, is essentially unscriptural. Why is it that many Christians condemn individualism but believe that universalism, which views temporal society as a total community of organic parts, is basically a Christian notion? The solution to this riddle is not difficult. They appeal to biblical statements which teach that God made all humankind “of one blood.” [Acts 17:26; KJV.] Scripture itself proclaims that humankind is one great community, originating in Adam and Eve. Isn’t this precisely the claim of the universalistic theory of society? Certainly not! The *genetic* origin or the way in which the human race originated with respect to its bodily existence sheds no light on the internal character and structure of the temporally distinct spheres of life in which God placed us.

If we carry the idea of Christian acceptance of universalism to its logical conclusion, the argument would proceed as follows. The temporal society of humankind is one large *familial* community founded on the bonds of blood. This familial community is a temporal totality of which all specific life-spheres are merely organic parts. Thus kinship bonds, individual fam-

ilies, states, ecclesiastical communities, economic structures, trade and industry are all equally parts of the familial community of humankind. Since parts must obey the law of the whole, the principle of the family is the true law for every specific life-sphere.

But, we must ask, is it indeed in harmony with Scripture to subject the life of the state to the law that governs the family? And is it possible to operate a modern industrial concern according to the example of the family? Clearly, whoever thinks in terms of this kind of universalism must begin by eliminating the internal natures of the various life-spheres that exist independently of the manner in which the human race takes on bodily form in the course of time.

But even a thinker like Abraham Kuyper, the great champion of the principle of sphere sovereignty, occasionally strayed into this universalistic trap by appealing to the genesis of humankind out of “one blood.” Where in his works he started to follow this universalistic direction, he proved at the same time to be once again susceptible to the universalistic theory of the “national community” understood as an individual whole embracing all of the human societal spheres. Then the doctrine of sphere sovereignty is given a turn in which the clear, scriptural contours of his famous speech *Sphere Sovereignty*¹ can hardly [181] be recognized. Then “nation” and “government” are proclaimed to be two sovereign spheres of life: the nation [*volk*] as the individual, total community embracing every natural, “organically grown” societal relationship; and the government as a mechanistic, “surgical” device which must not tamper with the rights of a “sovereign people.” Then the inner nature of the state is once again denied when the other, nonpolitical spheres of society, as autonomous elements of the natural life of the people [*volk*], are infused into it. Then we note the appearance of the dangerous theory of “organic franchise” and the defence of a system in which “corporate” as well as “political” interests are represented. Then “sphere sovereignty” is reduced to the constitutional guarantee of parliamentary representation against usurpations of power on the part of the government. A meagre guarantee indeed!

In contrast, the Word of God teaches us to see all temporal spheres of society in terms of the created root-community [*wortel-gemeenschap*] of humankind that fell from God in Adam, but that was restored to communion with God in Jesus Christ. But this root-community of humankind, revealed to us in the Word of God, is not *temporal* in nature. It bears a *spiritual, central-religious* character. It touches the relation of humankind to God.

If we take our point of departure in the revelation of the spiritual root-community of humankind, then we stand in implacable antithesis to

¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring* (Amsterdam: J.H. Kruyt, 1880). This address was delivered at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam.

every universalistic community ideology that considers a temporal community to be the totality of all societal relationships. Only the spiritual root-community in Jesus Christ bears a genuinely *totalitarian* character. Every other community ideology originates in the spirit of darkness.

The New Science Ideal

We have now traced in some detail the redirection in the conception of the humanistic freedom motive. The universalistic approach pushed the individualistic view to the background. Rationalism, which attempted to construe society out of its simplest elements – individuals – and which tried to reduce all individuality to a universal, conceptually definable rule or regularity, gave way to an *irrationalism* which did the opposite: it elevated the individual disposition or spirit of a people to the status of a special rule which cannot be applied to other peoples and nations.

It is a matter of course that this new conception of the freedom motive would also have definite repercussions in the realm of science. The natural-scientific standpoint of the classical science ideal had lost its attraction; the new universalistic approach rejected the scientific method [182] that divided a complex phenomenon into its simplest “elements.” Instead, taking its point of departure from the individual whole, the new universalism proceeded to understand the peculiar place and function of the parts in terms of the whole. Its focus was constantly on the individuality of phenomena.

The science of history lent itself particularly to the application of this new method, since the historian sought theoretical insight into what was individual and unique [*einmalig*]. When attempting to describe historical phenomena, the concern of historians was to grasp the phenomena in the historical context of a given period. When analyzing the High Renaissance, for instance, they dealt with a historical *whole* of a completely individual character which immediately differentiated itself according to the national peculiarities of the different peoples. In this kind of study the historian is not concerned with finding universal laws which determine the course of individual events, as had been the procedure by which classical natural science sought to determine natural phenomena.

It seemed, then, that the new historical way of thinking opposed the natural-scientific method in every respect. For example, the historical approach implied that one must see the present as dependent upon the past. Cultural development occurs only in conformity with the line of historical continuity. Historical tradition is the link which ties the present to the past. Tradition embodies itself in cultural treasures which are not acquired by isolated “individuals” but in the course of generations. This historical tradition again is not identical for every nation but presents individual variants in accordance with the individual character or spirit of a people [*Volksgeist*].

From the vantage point of the humanistic ground-motive, it seemed that historical development constituted a “dialectic” link between “nature” and “freedom.” (*Dialectic* then refers to the process of breaking through contrasts.) At first sight “culture” seems to be the free and autonomous product of an “individual national spirit.” But further reflection makes clear that this individual “creative freedom” has its reverse side in a hidden “natural necessity.” Unlike the thinkers of the French Revolution, the new historical thinkers could not view “freedom” in a rationalistic and individualistic fashion. The leaders of the Revolution believed that they were free of the past and that they could thus seek to realize their revolutionary ideas for all times and peoples. They thought they could begin with a “clean slate” and introduced the revolutionary calendar with the year one. But the historical way of thought brought to the fore the dependence of every national spirit upon its own individual past and upon its own tradition. A “hidden law” was at work in this dependence. The Romantics were fond of calling this law “divine [183] providence.” But just as often they called it – without reference to the familiar Christian terminology – the *destiny [Schicksal]* of a people.

This new historical way of thought, which we have already examined in an earlier context, was elevated to the status of a *new science ideal* which demanded recognition not only in the science of history but in every area of scientific inquiry. *Historicism*, the new humanistic view of reality, originated in this way. Just as the classical science ideal of humanism viewed all of reality from the perspective of natural science, so historicism viewed all of reality from the perspective of historical development. Just as the classical science ideal absolutized the aspect of mechanical motion, so the historical science ideal absolutized the aspect of history.

In the estimation of historicism the earlier natural-scientific way of thinking was not even valid in the area of natural phenomena. Nature as well as culture required historical analysis; for, like human culture, the earth, the heavens, plants, and animals were products of development. “Natural history” prefaced “cultural history,” the history of humanity. Nature itself contained the hidden traces of “creative freedom.” Physicists had recently discovered electrical phenomena which could not easily be explained in terms of the model of mechanical motion. To the Romantics this inadequacy of the mechanistic framework proved that even in “nature” the concept of “mechanical causation” could not be maintained consistently since “individual freedom” operated even in the phenomena of physics.

The Romantics saw a gradual increase in the “creative freedom” within “nature,” especially with reference to the world of “living organisms” which were preeminently suited to the universalistic way of thinking. The organism was investigated not as a mechanical aggregate of atoms but as a

whole composed of organic parts whose specific function could be understood only with reference to the individual whole. Thus “nature” itself revealed a dialectical interplay between “freedom” and “necessity” which seemed to cohere with the historical character of the whole of reality. In this way the link between universalism and historicism was established over the entire spectrum.

Like the classical science ideal, the new historical science ideal arose from the freedom motive of humanism. The historical approach merely gave the freedom motive a new universalistic and “irrational” direction. But the new science ideal did not overcome the inner conflict within the religious ground-motive of humanism. In time it too would come into conflict with the freedom motive. As a matter of fact, the historicistic way of thought would eventually cause an inner crisis within the humanistic worldview. In our day this crisis displays itself in the *spiritual* [184] *up-rootedness* of those who seek to live out of the humanistic ground-motive.

However, before we turn to the most recent course of development within humanism, we must pay attention to two significant matters. In the first place, we must take note of the deplorable influence of historicism on those Christian thinkers and statesmen who had taken a position against the principles of the French Revolution. In the second place, we must deal with the alliance between historicism and modern sociology (the science of human society) and point to the dangers which began to threaten Christian thought from this angle.

Counter-revolution and Christianity

Clearly, humanism’s shift to the historical way of thinking and to the universalistic overestimation of the community was a reactionary phenomenon in the history of the West. The real meaning of the so-called Restoration period, which followed upon the fall of Napoleon, was deeply permeated by these new humanistic motives. The Restoration clearly displayed the nature-freedom polarity of the humanistic religious ground-motive. Overestimation of the autonomous community followed the absolutization of free and autonomous individuals in the previous period of humanism. Irrationalism countered the rationalistic overemphasis on lawfulness or on the universal rule by overemphasizing individuality and the utterly unique. And overextension of historicistic thinking replaced overextension of natural-scientific thinking.

The new current within humanism was *conservative* in every respect. It defended tradition against the irrepressible urge for renewal felt by those more progressively inclined, those who represented the spirits of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The conservative character of this direction within humanism must be clearly seen. The eighteenth century Enlightenment and the French Revolution were indeed renewing and progressive forces in historical development. Although rooted in the human-

istic ground-motive, they fulfilled a task of their own with respect to the disclosure of western culture. The idea of human rights and the idea that the state is a republican institution serving the common good were the inspiring slogans in the battle against the undifferentiated conditions of feudal society.

In an earlier context I explained that the first unmistakable indications of genuine historical *progress* are to be found in the breaking up of the undifferentiated spheres of life which embrace persons in all of their [185] relations and which always have the character of totalitarian communities. As soon as the process of differentiation begins, undifferentiated communities are doomed to disappear. They then break up into differentiated spheres, each of which has its own specific destination but none of which – in terms of its inner nature – can then pretend to be the totalitarian community which embraces individuals in every area of their lives. Only with this process of differentiation is room created for the recognition of the *rights of individuals as such*, independent of a person's membership in particular communities like kinship bonds, nation, family, or church. What is called civil private law is a product of this process of development. In terms of its inner nature, civil private law is based on the rights of individuals and cannot tolerate dependence on race or nationality. Freedom and equality in a civil-legal sense were thus clearly not just hollow slogans of the French Revolution.

Such human rights did not exist in either primitive Germanic law or in feudal society. Under nazism we have experienced what it means when civil-legal freedom and equality are abolished and when a person's legal status depends upon the community of "blood and soil." A system of private civil law can only be realized when the state has been established as *res publica*, as a public institution, to terminate the rule of private feudal lords and to make all of its members equally subjects of public governmental authority in public-legal freedom and equality. Both of these institutions – the system of the state and the system of civil private law – were first fully introduced by the French Revolution.

However, because of the revolutionary principles underlying the Revolution, these fruits were not produced without blemish. Humanistic individualism led to overextending the civil-legal and the public-legal idea of freedom and equality. Hence it did not recognize the rights of the private, nonstate *communities* in society. It respected only free and autonomous *individuals* and their counterpart, the *state*, which was founded on the treacherous, individualistic grounds of popular sovereignty and social contract. This revolutionary individualism, which rejected not only the sovereignty of God but also the sphere sovereignty based on it, had no feeling for historical continuity in culture and could not provide a stable foundation for governmental authority. The idea of the state, hardly real-

ized, became the victim of the revolutionary consequences of the principle of popular sovereignty. France presented Europe with the spectacle of permanent revolution that could be smothered only temporarily by the iron fist of a dictator.

The Restoration period appealed to the new historical and universalistic [186] trend within humanism for support against this revolutionary, rationalistic individualism, placing itself on the side of historical tradition and presenting itself as the force of preservation and conservation. It did not display truly progressive and renewing tendencies. Its primary significance lay in its new insight into historical development, its stress on the national individuality of peoples, and its emphasis upon the community over against the rationalistic individualism of the French Revolution which neglected the significance of genuine communal relationships.

But the Restoration's reaction against the unhistorical, rationalistic, and individualistic traits of the Enlightenment contained great dangers. The new historicism encouraged a view of human society that excluded the acceptance of firm norms and clear limits between societal structures. The Restoration impeded a correct insight into the significance of the French Revolution for western culture by relativizing the basic differences between the differentiated and undifferentiated structure of society. Its universalistic thought pattern led to a dangerous community ideology which no longer recognized the essential import of human rights nor the inner nature of civil private law. The Historical School advocated the false notion that civil law is really folk law [*volksrecht*] and thus paved the way for national socialism with its *volk* ideology.

Regrettably, leading Christian thinkers and statesmen of the Restoration period did not perceive the humanistic ground-motive of the new spiritual movement. Both Roman Catholic and protestant thinkers sought support from the new universalism and historicism in battling the principles of the French Revolution. Roman Catholic thinkers like Louis de Bonald [1754-1840], Joseph de Maistre [1753-1821], and Pierre Balanche [1776-1847] drew inspiration from the new humanistic movement in order to glorify the mystical beauty of medieval society and to denounce the cold rationalism and individualism of the French Revolution. They claimed that medieval society had realized the true community ideal. "Natural" life, formed organically in guilds and medieval towns, was overarched by the "supranatural" community of the church, headed by the Vicar of Christ. With these thinkers the historical way of thought displayed definite reactionary tendencies.

Although protestants rejected the typically Roman Catholic characteristics of this reactionary social idea, they too appealed to the undifferentiated relationships of feudal society. Counter-revolutionary tendencies be-

came apparent here which rejected civil-legal freedom and equality and the republican idea of the state as fruits of the revolutionary spirit.

The well-known book by the Swiss nobleman Ludwig von Haller, [187] *Restauration der Staatswissenschaften*,¹ even led Groen van Prinsterer into this error during the first phase of his intellectual development. The dangerous origin of historicism was not fathomed. The very founders of the Historical School in Germany were devout Lutherans. And the manner in which the Romantics, particularly the philosopher Friedrich Schelling [1775-1854], were able to link historicism with the familiar doctrine of divine providence, blinded many believers. The Romantics no longer ridiculed the Christian faith. Near the end of his life Schelling wrote *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, which seemed to restore orthodox Christian dogmatics to its place of honor by rejecting the narrow-minded, rationalistic criticism of Scripture developed during the Enlightenment. Schelling blamed Christian theology for its fearful retreat from the conceited critique of rationalism.

Who at that time could recognize that Schelling's point of departure was not the Christian religion but *Vernunft*, the new historicistic and universalistic direction of the personality ideal? Schelling warned his readers in advance that his *Philosophie der Offenbarung* should be understood rationally; it should not be viewed as some sort of "Christian philosophy," for which he had no respect. His new so-called "positive philosophy" intended to show only that it too could comprehend the Christian truths in a rational manner.

Nonetheless, this unnatural bond between the Christian faith and universalistic historicism took hold. It persists even today, hampering seriously the proper impact of the scriptural motive of creation, fall, and redemption. [188]

¹ Ludwig von Haller, *Restauration der Staatswissenschaften*, 2 vols. (second edition, 1820-1825).