

GERMAN HISTORICISM AND THE CHANGING IMAGE OF THE CHURCH, 1780–1820

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A DICHOTOMY seems to exist between the ecclesiology of the Enlightenment, based on rational, natural law, which perceived the Church or any institution as a juridical *societas* having rights and obligations, and the ecclesiology of Sailer and the Tübingen School, which under the influence of the *Sturm und Drang* as well as romantic idealism concentrated on the religious and ethical aspects of the Church. In this latter view, the Church became a dynamic mediatrix of a living spirituality. Generally, this genesis of German romantic idealism and its implications for Catholic theology have been interpreted as a revolt against a weak and imitative Aufklärung, supposedly merely a reflection of the Franco-British Enlightenment experience.¹ The Aufklärung, however, was not merely a poor imitation of the Western model. There is a strong continuity between the Aufklärung and succeeding movements. A modern sense of historical consciousness emerged in the Aufklärung tradition and has connected the German Enlightenment with Hegel and romantic idealism. It is within this emergence of historicism that the ecclesiology of the Church experienced a transformation with implications even into the post-Vatican II era.

To analyze a religious issue from the perspective of individuals is reasonable, since theology is concerned with speculation. But a sense for the whole movement may be lost. To interpret on the basis of a specific program may also lose a sense for the relationship of the issue to the historical epoch. Hence the levels of interpretation represented by individuals, schools, programs, or movements must be completed by an appeal to such notions as theological strategy or mood. Denoting mood expresses lines of affinity that are as important as adherence to a specific movement. Within a given epoch the term "strategy" helps specify a level above that of program or of method in the technical sense. In studying the response of such reformist Catholics as Johann Michael Sailer and Johann Sebastian von Drey, the focus should be on their efforts to respond to the German Aufklärung rather than merely to the Franco-British Enlightenment and romantic idealism. Viable answers to theolog-

¹ The popular view, in which scholars separate romantic idealism from the Enlightenment *Zeitgeist*, is much too restricted; for the delineation of this traditional perspective, see P. Stockmeier, "Die Kirchenväter und die katholische Tübinger Schule," in *Theologie im Wandel* (ed. J. Ratzinger and J. Neumann; Munich: Wewel, 1967) 138–40. In this article Aufklärung refers to the German phase of the Enlightenment. When the term Enlightenment is employed alone, the Franco-British phase is meant.

ical questions should reflect a specific *Weltanschauung*, which here would include not only this emerging romantic-idealism but also the potent historicism that served to connect the Aufklärung to later German intellectual movements.

Generally, scholars of the Enlightenment have focused on the Franco-British experience in order to derive categories in terminology for an analysis of the eighteenth century. Aspiring to achieve unity of interpretation, however, has ignored the fact that the Enlightenment was simultaneously a cosmopolitan as well as a national movement. The German Enlightenment or Aufklärung was not a weak imitation of the Western experience. This Aufklärung was preoccupied with religious questions—a fact not surprising in territories in which the middle class was a university, governmental, and religious elite, perennially obsessed with confessional controversies. One phase of the Aufklärung certainly reflected the Western experience. Leibniz and Wolff, the two leading proponents of a dominant trend of the German Enlightenment, sought cosmic harmony and hoped to further a settlement between reason and revelation as well as between natural and positive law.

In a letter while reminiscing on his youth, Sailer surprisingly expressed a similar perception of the eighteenth-century theological situation:

The spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*) in the mid-1780's can be characterized in the following terms. Rationalism swept through Germany, more especially the illusion that man's rational faculty could establish and secure a single, true, and salvation-guaranteeing religion. This rationalism expressed itself in pamphlets, in systems, in conversations, in secret societies, and in many other institutions. It was not satisfied—indeed it did not even bother—to deny the distinctive doctrines of the Catholic Church; its basis was merely the simple assertion: nothing in positive Christianity is acceptable except its "reasonable morality," the doctrine that God is the father of all things, and the proposition that man's soul is immortal; what goes beyond these three assertions is either poetry or superstition or pure nonsense.²

² F. Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (ed. C. Hinrichs; Munich: Oldenbourg, 1953); for a full development of the emergence of historicism, see P. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1975); both Meinecke and Reill have discerned in the Aufklärung the seedbed of modern intellectual movements; Sailer's letter can be found in K. Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1966) 112-13; H. Becher, *Die Jesuiten: Gestalt und Geschichte des Ordens* (Munich: Kösel, 1951); H. Brück, *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche in Deutschland im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (4 vols.; Mainz: Kirchheim, 1887-1908); H. Hermelink, *Das Christentum in der Menschheitsgeschichte: Von der französischen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart* (3 vols.; Stuttgart: Metzler and Wunderlich, 1951-55). For books on eighteenth-century moral theology, see W. Martens, *Die Botschaft der Tugend: Die Aufklärung im Spiegel der deutschen moralischen Wochenschriften* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968); J. Rabas, *Katechetischer Erbe der Aufklärungszeit, kritisch dargestellt am Lehrbuch der christkathol. Religion von J. F. Batz, Bamberg, 1799* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963).

Sailer's perspective here was limited, but similar to that of another popular commentator who felt that the Aufklärung was, "put simply, the effort of the human mind to examine not only the world of *ideas* but rather of *all things* which exercise an influence upon human affairs, in accordance with the pure teachings of reason, and with a view to promoting whatever is useful."³ The Aufklärung, however, was not merely an imitation of Western analyses; it had its own character, its own questions, and its own answers. The Aufklärers' religious convictions led some to promote the historical view that postulated reciprocity between spirit and nature. Reflecting this fascination during the last half of the eighteenth century, three movements which would effect the ecclesiological metamorphosis were already maturing within the German Aufklärung: historicism, romanticism, and idealism.

HISTORICISM, IDEALISM, ROMANTICISM

Historicism may be defined as a mode of viewing the world so that the truth, meaning, or value of anything can be found in history. Through history an understanding of the human condition can be ascertained. Such a perception can confront and transvalue the burden of the past. Historicism utilizes a dualistic principle, since it attempts to mediate between such conflicting ideas as change and continuity or individuality and communal being. Throughout the last half of the eighteenth century, German thinkers sought to steer a course, for example, between a rational and an emotional religion. Increasingly they attempted to resolve the conflict by adopting historical consciousness, which could serve as the guiding beacon. Further, this historicism could function as a moral critique of the narrowness of contemporary existence. For the Aufklärers, history became the guide in their search for an understanding of the human condition. Unlike many Western thinkers of the era, who defined perfection in normative, positive terms, German intellectuals viewed perfection as a potentiality toward which man could strive. History served to analyze the genetic process wherein each stage was viewed as unique, informed by its own spirit, yet symbiotically related to its past and its future.

The historicist understanding that emerged during the Aufklärung offered a strand of continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and helped remove the alleged opposition of at least the German Enlightenment to such later developments as romanticism and idealism.⁴ Initially the Aufklärung sought to rescue history from its seventeenth-

³ A. Reim, *Über Aufklärung: Ob sie dem Staate-der Religion-oder überhaupt gefährlich sey, und seyn könne. Ein Wort zur Beherzigung für Regenten, Staatsmänner und Priester* (Berlin: Rüdigers, 1788) 35.

⁴ G. Lukacs, *Goethe and His Age* (London: Merlin, 1968); Janine Buenzod, "De l'Aufklärung au Sturm und Drang: Continuité ou rupture?" in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (ed. T. Besterman; Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1963) 289-314.

century conundrum resulting from the inability of historians to resolve the barrier between the general and particular. During this era, history had become either a science of corroboration or what seemed to be a purposeless obsession with trivia. Uninterested in causal relationships, its practitioners sought a knowledge of the phenomena which existed either in the physical cosmos or in a specific material substance. The initial task of discovering the rationale for "those things which are or occur" devolved upon deductive philosophy, which had borrowed a mathematical model for its mode of reasoning.⁵ Gradually the historical rationalism of the Aufklärung destroyed the legendary composition of the past. But scholars ceased being satisfied with the negative critique; they increasingly sought a knowledge of the interconnection of events, based on a critical evaluation of the sources. The historian, the Aufklärers maintained, must seek genetic connections with the past to understand the complete man and not just speculate on the individual as a rational being.

August Ludwig von Schlözer expressed this awareness while taking a potshot at Voltaire: "the critic unearths the single fact from annals and memorials (the Voltaires create these themselves or at least color them). The task of the historian is to put them together (*zusammenstellen*) to form a unity (*Einheit*)."⁶ Pragmatic history as perceived by the Aufklärers required a shift from fixed categories to comprehending in terms of connections. This mutation characterized the intellectual milieu of the last half of the eighteenth century.⁷ History appeared filled with the examples of the impotence of reason. Hence some Aufklärers concluded that it was vain folly to rely upon abstract concepts for man's salvation. Instead, according to Schmauss, the program of the future must be grounded on a recognition of man's total nature as it has historically developed.⁸

The concept of causation on every level attracted the Aufklärers. In 1767 Johann Christoph Gatterer expressed this dominant theme: "The chief concern of the historian is to search for the occasions and causes of an important event and to develop as well as possible the whole system of causes and effects, of means and intentions, no matter how confused they may seem at first."⁹ Pure logic or mathematics would not suffice.

⁵ C. Wolff, *Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 3; Reill, *The German Enlightenment* 29-30.

⁶ A. von Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Dieterich, 1772-73) 1, 45.

⁷ M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1945) 285.

⁸ J. von Justi, *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa: Eine Abhandlung worin die Richtigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit dieses zeitlichen Lehrgebäudes der Staatskunst deutlich vor Augen gelegt* (Altona: Iversen, 1758) 5-6.

⁹ J. Gatterer, ed. *Allgemeine historische Bibliothek von Mitgliedern des königlichen Instituts der historischen Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (16 vols.; Halle: Gebauer, 1767-71) 1, 80-81.

Wegelin asserted that apprehending the people's character meant that the cultural life of the people as expressed in language, opinions, and ideas had to be perceived.¹⁰ A historian was advised to understand a society's *Volkscharakter* before attempting to delineate the causes of historical phenomena.

To the Aufklärer, historians were to analyze complexities without denying the role of abstract form; the Aufklärers searched for the unique conjunction of spiritual, moral, and structural elements that animated a specific historical phenomenon.¹¹ Like Rousseau, Herder, and Tocqueville, the Aufklärers maintained that societies have been given their structure through the feelings, beliefs, ideas, and the habits of heart and mind of the individuals who composed them. Such shared communal feelings as those embodied in custom, language, and law molded the character or spirit of the epoch.¹² Advancing from their analyses of society, Protestant neologists, for example, insisted that even the Church was an institution in flux, changing and never the same.¹³

The history of religion was interpreted by Semler in Leibnizian terms of process. Religious cognition occurs on an infinite number of levels. As time passes, there develops a continual expansion of man's religious consciousness as part of God's plan. "It is and remains God's wisest and most holy decree (*Ordnung*) that He rules and develops the human moral world as well as the physical world; hence new conceptions, new combinations of reasons and proofs, must appear incessantly among Christians; it is the nature of moral religion." The moral world, then, is analogous to the physical as it changes and varies.¹⁴ God's revelation was now perceived as expansive, at least in form, as a function of human developments embodied in history and attributed to specific epochs, in which man's moral awareness has burst through the temporal structures of historical religion. In effect, such a transformation in religious consciousness could

¹⁰ J. Wegelin, *Briefe über den Werth der Geschichte* (Berlin: K. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, 1783) 13.

¹¹ A. H. L. Heeren, "Ueber die Entstehung, die Ausbildung und den praktischen Einfluss der politischen Theorien in dem neueren Europa," *Kleine historische Schriften* (3 vols.; Göttingen: Röweh, 1803-8) 2, 249-50.

¹² G. Kelly, *Idealism, Politics and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969) 4.

¹³ J. von Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History Ancient and Modern: From the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century in Which the Rise, Progress and Variations of Church Power are Considered in Their Connection with the State of Learning and Philosophy and the Political History of Europe during That Period* (6 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: Baynes, 1819) 1, 1.

¹⁴ J. S. Semler, *Johann Semlers Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefasst* (2 vols.; Halle: J. G. Trampe, 1781-82) 2, 156; J. S. Semler, *Neuer Versuch die gemeinnützige Auslegung und Anwendung des Neuen Testaments zu befördern* (Halle: Trampe, 1786) 18, 93.

result in a wrenching denial of past historical commitments and lead to a questioning of deeply ingrained values, attitudes, and traditions. Due to the interrelation between society and religion, such questioning can be seen as the precursor of the modernization phenomenon of the nineteenth century.

To the Aufklärers it appeared obvious that even spiritual phenomena were not forever immutable. The reality of religion began appearing as the universal action of the spirit. This interpretation convinced the Aufklärers of the relativism of all human creation.¹⁵ The Aufklärung vision of progress was reformist; their sense of future time was controlled by their immersion into past time and was modified by the realization that every nation, every historical epoch, had its own merit, its own unique spirit. Significantly in the Aufklärung, history was seen as a guide in the search for things human. This perspective, it was thought, yielded a concept of development and a notion of individuality as well as of social collectivity. The Aufklärers formulated a theory of historical understanding that established a duality between nature and spirit and recognized that all cognition reflects the milieu in which it is generated,¹⁶ not absolute laws or deductive reasoning.

This emergence of historicism during the last half of the eighteenth century and its emphasis on development as well as on individuality proved supportive to the romantic idealism that formed a reaction to the mechanistic, rationalistic aspects of the Franco-British Enlightenment. During the last half of the eighteenth century, therefore, the mood of German thought markedly changed. Educated Germans began rejecting empirical rationalism, which often produced an enlightened perspective both mechanical and one-dimensional; they took advantage of the fulness of emotional experience being explored by secular writers of the *Sturm und Drang* era as well as by the pietists. As a stage in the history of ideas, German romantic idealism was not derived from any one single source whether identified as classical humanism, rationalism, or Protestantism. Agreeing with classicism and the norms of the Western Enlightenment, idealists asserted that that which is an end in itself—the primacy of man, unity of being, intelligibility—is realizable by man in time. Agreeing with romanticism, idealists maintained that human history, actually the cosmos as a whole, lives by the generation and confrontation of polarities. German idealism was shaped as a philosophical outlook which, as a *Weltanschauung* with adequate religious dimensions,

¹⁵ W. Hofer, *Geschichtschreibung und Weltanschauung: Betrachtungen zum Werk Friedrich Meineckes* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1950); J. von Justi, *Vergleichungen der europäischen mit den asiatischen und andern vermeintlich barbarischen Regierungen* (Berlin: Rüdigers, 1762) Vorrede.

¹⁶ Reill, *The German Enlightenment* 210-20.

proved capable of sheltering German Protestants from the intellectual storms of the era.¹⁷ In fact, the philosophical problems Hegel sought to resolve with the dialectical method were posed, though not solved, by the Aufklärers. These Aufklärers conceived of spirit as an independent force that did not exist outside history. Each historical form contains a spiritual component and an element reflecting material and historical factors.

Romanticism¹⁸ also cherished experience and tradition, emotion and reason, religion and science, the real and ideal, individual and group, order and freedom, man and nature. There was, then, a spiritual affinity between the romantic and idealistic movements, but the former was more an attitude toward life in the universe than a systematic and abstract philosophy. German idealists, however, certainly shared the romantic appreciation of historical continuity and development. History became for romantics the working out in time of a spiritual idea.¹⁹

From 1770 until at least 1840 a structural unity is apparent in the intellectual life of Germany. Rooted in the Aufklärung with its emphasis both on the rational faculty of the individual man and on the ability of that man to trace historical causation genetically and delineate future progress in civilization, German intellectuals stressed the importance of the moral development of man and opposed the one-sided mechanistic empiricism and Humean skepticism of the eighteenth century. For both romantics and idealists, life was the historical emanation and development of the absolute spirit in the world. It was not, therefore, "being" but

¹⁷ W. O. Shanahan, *German Protestants Face the Social Question: The Conservative Phase, 1815-1871* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1954) 9-10; for the relationship existing between Protestantism and idealism, see K. Bornhausen, "Christentum und Idealismus: Eine geschichtsphilosophische Grundlegung," *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* 45 (1931) 1-17; H. A. Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit: Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte* (5 vols.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1923-57) 1, 9-59, 369; 5, 369-71; R. Anchor, *Germany Confronts Modernization: German Culture and Society, 1790-1890* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1972) 49; H. Holborn, "Der deutsche Idealismus in sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 144 (1952) 359-84.

¹⁸ J. J. Saunders, "A Short-Lived Revival," *Romanticism: Problems of Definition, Explanation, and Evaluation* (ed. John B. Halstead; Boston; Heath, 1965) 2-3; on German romanticism see R. Benz, *Die deutsche Romantik: Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1937); J. Droz, *Le romantisme politique en Allemagne* (Paris: A. Colin, 1963); O. Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923); J. Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown, 1950) 1, 379.

¹⁹ H. Heimsoeth, *Fichte* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1923); S. Leon, *La philosophie de Fichte* (Paris: Alean, 1902); H. Knittermeyer, *Schelling und die romantische Schule* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1929); W. Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955); H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston: Beacon, 1960); J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-Examination* (New York: Collier, 1962).

“becoming,” an eternal movement of unique individual acts, which could be understood and reproduced only by the active application of the thinker’s sensitive empathy. German idealists and romantics sought to discover the plastic forces underlying tangible historical reality. They rejected the separation of physical and spiritual being as they searched for the realities underlying appearances.²⁰ Romanticism and idealism are not reactions as such to the *Aufklärung*, but are continuous developments growing from the historicism emerging during the eighteenth century in Germany.

SAILER

In the spirit of the age, Catholics also attempted reform within their institutional Church. It is difficult to judge “Reform Catholicism,” because it inevitably grew from heterogeneous motives and led to very mixed results. Reform Catholicism could include Febronius, Joseph II, and Abbot Rautenstrauch. But cosmetic or strictly institutional reform could not suffice. Catholicism was in danger of losing the philosophical battle of the *Aufklärung*, which was questioning the concept of religion as a supernaturally grounded phenomenon, since Catholics had not previously put forward an ecclesiology that reflected the dominant currents of the era. Most Catholics seemed to feel that it was the Church that was still in question, whereas contemporary European thinkers were debating the essence of religion itself and had begun to view it merely as a cultural expression of a specific population.²¹ In fact, both aspects of the spiritual question had to be treated in order to give religion credibility in an increasingly secular world. Catholics had either to reject or assimilate wherever possible the intellectual values of their era.

In meeting their responsibilities to revive the Church shaken by the rationalistic Enlightenment and the French Revolution, a few Catholic theologians accepted the responsibility and challenge of updating Catholicism so that it could compete effectively in the philosophico-theological market place. These reforming theologians hoped to escape the baroque ecclesiology of the Counter Reformation and Enlightenment, which in their perception was based on natural law and on the Church as a legalistic institution. Detesting radical revolution, Catholic reformers hoped to preserve the continuity of historical development. Catholic renewal theologians had no wish to re-establish old forms, but to construct new ecclesiological models appropriate to the times and capable of

²⁰ Shanahan, *German Protestants* 9–10.

²¹ L. Just, “Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Febronianismus,” *Jahrbuch für das Bistum Mainz* 5 (1950) 15–35; E. Winter, *Der Josephinismus und seine Geschichte: Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Österreichs, 1740–1848* (Brunn: Rohrer, 1943); B. Plongeron, “Archetypal Christianity: The Models of 1770 and 1830,” *Concilium* 7 (1971) 81.

making traditional religion meaningful.²² The historicist paradigm emerging during the Aufklärung and romantic idealism stimulated theologians to focus on the meaning of religion and refashion theological perspectives with an eye to organically living institutions and the dignity of the individual. Both Sailer and Drey accepted the challenge proposed by their intellectual contemporaries.

Johann Michael Sailer (1751–1832) had been a Jesuit until the dissolution of that order in 1773 and thereafter continued as a secular priest and theological reformer. Envious colleagues at Dillingen accused him of rationalism, and later Clemens Maria Hofbauer labeled him a mystic. Despite the attacks, he died in 1832 as bishop of Ratisbon, revered by his pupils and colleagues as well as by Protestant leaders.²³ A reformer in the homiletical and pedagogical fields, Sailer significantly redefined the meaning of tradition and revelation within an experiential and idealistic framework. In his early work Sailer de-emphasized the juridical Church in favor of the inner experience of faith. He also transcended purely empirical rationalism entrapping what he felt the religious life should be.

Although Sailer himself rejected the label of Aufklärer, he contended nevertheless that the age of reason should not be condemned root and branch, but rather that Catholic theologians should evaluate the work of the *philosophes* critically and use their material selectively. Sailer is a

²² The standard works are the perceptive P. Brachin, *Le cercle de Münster (1779–1806) et la pensée religieuse de F. L. Stolberg* (Lyon: IAC, 1952); E. Reinhard, *Die Münsterische "Familia sacra"* (Münster: Regensburg, 1953); R. Till, *Hofbauer und sein Kreis* (Vienna: Herold, 1951); J. Jannsen, *Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg* (2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1877); R. Volpers, *R. Schlegel als politischer Denker und deutscher Patriot* (Berlin: Behr, 1917); L. Sauzin, *Adam Heinrich Müller: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Les Presses Modernes, 1937); H. Küng, *The Council, Reform and Reunion* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961) 50–55.

²³ Accurate accounts of Sailer's life and contributions may be found in R. Stölzle, "Johann Michael Sailer," *Catholic Encyclopedia* 13 (New York: Appleton, 1912) 328; J. F. Groner, "Johann Michael Sailer," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 12 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 851–52; H. Schiel, *Johann Michael Sailer: Leben und Briefe* (2 vols.; Regensburg: Pustet, 1948–52); B. Lang, *Bischof Sailer und seine Zeitgenossen* (Regensburg: Manz, 1932); R. Stölzle, "Johann Michael Sailer's Berufung an die Universität Ingolstadt, 1799: Ein Beitrag zur Gelehrten- und zur Biographie Sailer's," *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 143 (1909) 68–78; P. Lippert, "Johann Michael Sailer: Zur 100. Wiederkehr seines Todestages (20. Mai 1832)," *Stimmen der Zeit* 123 (1932) 84; also B. Lang, "Johann Michael Sailer und der Protestantismus," *Neues Abendland* 3 (1948) 38, brings out very clearly that Sailer's work was well known to influential Protestants. Eduard von Schenk, the Bavarian Minister of Interior c. 1830, e.g., recalled that Sailer's name and works were household words in his youth (Schiel, *Leben* 1, 724); E. Dauzenroth, "Johann Michael Sailer, der Aufklärer: Den Denkenden unter seinen Verächtern," *Vierteljahresschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik* 1 (1959) 300; G. Brandhuver, "J. M. Sailer's Rechtfertigung gegen die Anklagen des hl. Klemens Maria Hofbauer," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 52 (1932) 72, 76; M. Schoof, *A Survey of Catholic Theology, 1800–1970* (New York: Paulist/Newman, 1970) 23–25.

product as well as a critic of the Enlightenment. Although not consciously in the historicist tradition, he combined the universalism so predominant in the Enlightenment with an individualism supported by *Sturm und Drang* authors and by the historicist Aufklärers. An omnivorous reader, he possessed a sensitivity to the underlying intellectual currents of his era. He reflected on the meaning of divine revelation as well as on tradition and redefined the exterior framework of the Church in light of the new experiential-historicist emphasis characterizing the Aufklärung while simultaneously maintaining the inner, objective essence of faith. Sailer incorporated into his theology a stress on the internal spiritual life that animated religious responses within the ongoing institutional community. He comprehended the Christian life as an inner spiritual experience stimulated by the historical and living community of the Church. In the process he was molded by almost all the thinkers of his era who were focusing on rational analysis, deism, anthropology, and morality.²⁴

Sailer was certainly not inflexibly closed to rational investigation. But in his case a purely rationalistic Enlightenment was only an initial

²⁴ K. Diel, *Die Stellung der Ethik Johann Michael Sailers zum Eudaimonismus mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres geschichtlichen Verhältnis zur Ethik Kants* (Giessen: Giessen University, 1929) 23; see Sailer's letters to Dann from the years 1806–8 in Lang, "Sailer und der Protestantismus" 40–41; J. M. Sailer, *Sämtliche Werke* (ed. Josef Widmer; 41 vols.) (Sulzbach: von Seidelschen, 1830–41), supplemental volume 1855 (hereafter cited *WW*); "Wider den blinden Eifer gegen Alles, was Aufklärung heisst," *WW* 3, 152–56; J. R. Geiselman, *Von lebendiger Religiosität zum Leben der Kirche: Johann Michael Sailers Verständnis der Kirche geistesgeschichtlich gedeutet* (Stuttgart: Schwabenverlag, 1952) 13–17; P. Funk, *Von der Aufklärung zur Romantik: Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Münchener Romantik* (Munich: Kösel and Pustet, 1925) 86; P. Funk, "Aufklärer und christlicher Humanismus: Zu Johann Michael Sailers 100. Todestag," *Hochland* 39 (1931–32) 314; H. Schiel, "Der unbekannte Sailer," *Hochland* 10 (1928–29) 424; H. Schiel, "Ignaz Demeter und die Erweckungsbewegung," *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv* 30 (1930) 344; S. Merkle, "Johann Michael Sailer," *Religiöse Erzieher der katholischen Kirche aus den letzten vier Jahrhunderten* (ed. S. Merkle and B. Bess; Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1920) 188; H. Beck, "Johann Michael Sailers Stellung in der deutschen Geistesgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für Geistesgeschichte* 3 (1937) 240; H. J. Müller, *Die ganze Bekehrung: Das zentrale Anliegen des Theologen und Seelsorgers Johann Michael Sailers* (Salzburg: O. Müller, 1956) 27; K. Eschweiler, *Die zwei Wege der neueren Theologie: Georg Hermes-Matth Jos. Scheeben. Eine kritische Untersuchung des Problems der theologischen Erkenntnis* (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1926) 49–80; Eschweiler, *Zwei Wege* 56–62; Geiselman, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 53–65, 110; A. L. Mayer, "Liturgie, Aufklärung und Klassizismus," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 9 (1929) 90; B. Thiel, "Die liturgische Bewegung im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und in unseren Tagen," *Bonner Zeitschrift für Theologie und Seelsorge* 5 (1928) 33; J. Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie: Neuzeit und Gegenwart* (2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1960) 2, 239; H. Weber, *Sakrament und Sittlichkeit: Eine moralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Bedeutung der Sakrament in der deutschen Moraltheologie der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1966) 55; O. Schaffner, "Das Moralprinzip bei den Tübinger Theologen im Wandel der letzten 150 Jahre," in Ratzinger, *Theologie im Wandel* 590.

intellectual experience rich in potential for the future. He was receptive to the speculative potentialities of man, and his work was characterized by a basically optimistic tone. This orientation was reinforced by the idea of the human dignity of each person, a seminal insight common to both the *philosophes* and Kant.²⁵ Religion for Sailer naturally became more than morality. Even so, Sailer's acceptance of Kantian moral analysis reinforced his emphasis on human dignity and the role of man in the cosmos.

The Christian kerygma, he maintained, could not be fully understood in its essence merely by the individual's use of theoretical or practical reason. In the ethical autonomy of the Kantian system, revealed Christianity served only as a means for the communication of values derived from the moral order. In his work Sailer fused ethics and positive Christianity by maintaining that the ultimate moral ethos for man originated with historical Christianity. He discarded natural ethics as a form of autonomous and hence subjective religion. Built upon the kerygma, the spirit of Christianity was to sanctify the human species. The goal of the Christian dispensation was to unite mankind again with God through Christ. But sanctification implied more than a mere philosophical deduction of duties; it was the process of God's life working with the cooperation of the specific human being.²⁶

Morality is fostered by the education of the human race through Scripture and tradition as well as through the immediate life of the Church as a community. In the final analysis, Christianity makes possible in the most complete sense natural or philosophical ethics. For Sailer, the Christian religion was the earthly manifestation of God, designed to make man holy and blessed through Christ. Man's participation in God's life, in the sense of being an image of God, was designated by Sailer as the central focus around which religion should be organized. Since God is a person, participation in God's life can ground personality and hence human responsibility. Christianity taught no new logic, but rather was a new spiritual birth. Moral development, a religious disposition, and the holy life are the results of positive Christianity, which has the power to actualize man's spiritual potential by making him truly free. Sailer went one step beyond the Kantian ethic based on the categorical imperative which replaced Christianity with critical philosophy. For Sailer, holy love

²⁵ G. Fischer, *Johann Michael Sailer und Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: Der Einfluss evangelischer Christen auf Sailers Erkenntnistheorie und Religionsphilosophie in Auseinandersetzung mit Immanuel Kant. Mit einem Forschungsnachtrag der Beziehungen der Sailerischen Moraltheologie zur materialen Ethik Kants* (Freiburg: Herder, 1955) 95; *WW* 8, 55-56; I. Weilner, *Gottselige Innigkeit: Die Grundhaltung der religiösen Seele nach Johann Michael Sailer* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1949) 87; Eschweiler, *Zwei Wege* 116; F. X. Thalhofer, "Johann Michael Sailer und Franz Xaver Bronner," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Hochstifts Augsburg* 1 (1909-1911) 401; Schaffner, "Moralprinzip" 585, 590.

²⁶ Geiselman, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 113-14; *WW* 12, 559.

sanctifies reason, not reason love. Reason is the eye of love, which is the substitute for not directly seeing God.²⁷

Responsive to Friedrich Jacobi and Johann Lavater, Sailer created an image of man ignited by his religious impulses. He revised the naturalism that stressed man's and not God's role in creating human values. As a result, he emphasized the ideal relation that should exist between Creator and creature. Man cannot spark religion in himself. He cannot be his own spirit, his own God. For Sailer, life becomes real in man only if the ego is broken, leaving the individual receptive to God's life. The experience Sailer approaches here is immersion in God's grace, the real God Himself entering into the soul of man. Sailerian anthropology was derived from the antinaturalistic conception of the omnipotent God, unchangeable even in the world. The grace of God is the spirit of Christ; the spirit of Christ is God's spirit. God is love animating His Church.²⁸

Derived from the experiential idea of life and influenced by the *Sturm und Drang* movement, Sailer's anthropology emphasized man in relation to a living and loving and not just a juridical God. Man is a recipient of this life. In opposition to the popular Enlightenment *Weltanschauung*, Jesus Christ was no professor who only taught his pupil to know the good, no mere proponent of virtue who only demonstrated improvement through physical change. He is the savior of the species who transforms the hearts of men and ignites love in them. Jesus is no mere teacher of truth, no mere model of virtue, no rabbi for the Jews, no Socrates for heathens. He is the salvation of sinners, the holiness of the world. "God in Christ—the holiness of the world" is a formula with a profound meaning for Sailer. Therein is contained all knowledge of faith and morals, the full realization of Christianity.²⁹

²⁷ A. Regenbrecht, *Johann Michael Sailers "Idee der Erziehung": Eine Untersuchung zur Einheit des Erziehungsbegriffs* (Freiburg: Herder, 1961) 108–9; L. Radlmaier, *Johann Michael Sailer als Pädagog* (Berlin: A. Hofmann, 1909) 45; T. Steinbüchel, *Die philosophische Grundlegung der katholischen Sittenlehre* (3rd ed.; 2 vols.; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1947) 2, 252; P. Klotz, *Johann Michael Sailer als Moralphilosoph: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Ethik im XIX. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1909) 170; *WW* 8, 215–16, 421; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 115; *WW* 12, 480, 543–44; Fischer, *Sailer und Jacobi* 8; *WW* 14, 22–23; Weilner, *Innigkeit* 131, 211.

²⁸ Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 152–153; on the anthropology of the Enlightenment, see Sebastian Merkle, "Das Menschbild im Zeitalter aufgeklärten Denkens," *Das Bild vom Menschen: Beiträge zur theologischen und philosophischen Anthropologie. Festschrift für Fritz Tillmann* (ed. T. Steinbüchel and T. Müncker; Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1934) 92–105; J. M. Sailer, *Blicke des heiligen Paulus in die Tiefen der Weisheit: Ein Versuch den Sinn und Geist des Apostels in christlichen Reden zu enthüllen* (3 vols.; Munich: I. J. Lentner, 1813) 2, 149–51, 140.

²⁹ J. Sailer, *Neue Beiträge zur Bildung der Geistlichen* (2 vols.; Munich: I. J. Lentner, 1809–11) 2, 276; J. M. Sailer, *Grundlehren der Religion: Ein Leitfaden zu seinen Religionsvorlesungen an die akademischen Jünglinge aus allen Fakultäten* (1st ed.; Munich: I. J. Lentner, 1805; 2nd ed., 1814); Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1814) 244–45; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 154–65; Sailer, *Blicke des hl. Paulus* 2, 48–49; Müller, *Bekehrung* 85; *WW* 18, 84; *WW* 19, 72.

Sailer described Christianity as God reconciling mankind with Himself. Christ unified man with God and under God. The goal of conversion was reunification and reconciliation with God, sanctification, entrance into the kingdom of God, an inclination toward God, virtue and the blessed life, and, finally, the irrevocable and personal unification of man with God. Through this insight was created the anthropological and Christological basis needed to comprehend the role of the Church, founded by Christ, as the holy community uniting all men and women and maintaining God's truth contained in revelation and tradition.³⁰ This living Church was only possible because of Sailer's adherence to the dynamic relationship between God and man. But Sailer's original experiential and individualistic perspective would not suffice as the basis for a religion resting on the objective entrance of God into history. For Sailer, the outcome ultimately had to yield a Church enlivened by God, who maintained His personal presence through the historical revelation and tradition that communicated His word.

The Church was not grounded on the New Testament, because it was living before the written scriptural components ever existed or were collected. The Church was historically rooted in the living tradition of the apostles. These twelve were not dead writers but living tongues whose words have been carried forward by the spirit of Christ alive in religious communities. The content of this apostolic Christianity was the content of a living tradition which has its interior essence in the *norma fidei* or *regula fidei* living in the historical consciousness of the Church. It was also a living tradition in so far as the words of the apostles persist in the dicta of those who have represented the Church institutionally through all times. Scripture became the concrete expression of a flowing spiritual life, a type of crystallization process, which the Church reflected through its interpretations and could release through its life-giving force.³¹

With increasing conviction during his career, Sailer asserted that autonomous man is spiritually dead and incapable of moral rebirth solely through his own efforts, since new life could come only through Christ's grace. Hence Sailer no longer viewed the Church simply as the institutionalized means to holiness, directing men and women to return to God. Rather, the historical Church now became a community, the spiritual vehicle for grace and for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the embodiment of the continuously living Christ.³² As the historical

³⁰ Müller, *Bekehrung* 88; *WW* 7, 259; *WW* 16, 12; *WW* 17, 55; *WW* 28, 33; *WW* 19, 37, 196–200; *WW* 26, 115; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 156–58; Sailer, *Neue Beiträge* 2, 152; *WW* 39, 400.

³¹ Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1805) 380.

³² Müller, *Ganze Bekehrung* 290; *WW* 8, 155; *WW* 16, 2, 5, 13; *WW* 27, 47–49, 77; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 152–63.

God-man, Christ still lives in his Church, which provides the foundation for the fullest expression of man's moral capacities.

Sailer based this vital Christianity on the principle of the living tradition housed in the Church. Living tradition did not mean simply the promulgation of revelation *viva voce* through spoken words, in opposition to the silent words of Scripture; it was also the proclamation as it historically has emanated continuously from the spirit-filled heart. "Living" was understood in the sense of the experiential spirit of the *Sturm und Drang* era. The proclamation of God's word in Christ served as the principle conduit of religious truth for all time. Sailer was not exclusively concerned with specific formal dogmas following the initial transmission, but rather insisted that the kerygma be attached to the living spirit in the community, so that life be related and ignited through Life, love reflect Love. In his *Religionskollegien* (1973) as in the *Grundlehren* (1805) dogma was grounded on Christ and on the apostolic preaching as living tradition. The apostles were living witnesses to the life of Christ.³³

The Church was a living mediatrix of this faith rooted in apostolic tradition. In the pulsing word of this Church experienced by human persons, tradition can be fully believed. The function of the Church as the historically living bearer of tradition so impressed Sailer that in his *Grundlehren* he expressed his commitment to tradition, simultaneously divine, apostolic, and ecclesiastical. Although he had described in his *Theologiae christianae cum philosophia nexus* (1779) a tradition based on God's word, planted and nourished by the apostles, and then interpreted juridically by the Church, Sailer now saw under the rubric "divine tradition" something with content, namely the *word* which has its origin in God and continues enlivening the Church.³⁴

As he developed the new image of the Church, he simultaneously evolved the concept of tradition and Scripture that lay at the basis of his ecclesiology. In *Theologiae christianae cum philosophia nexus* tradition as a source of revelation was placed beside Scripture in accord with the formula approved at Trent. In the first edition of the *Pastoraltheologie* (1788), he substituted in place of *the* tradition the existence of tradition in various forms, a view more clearly delineated in his *Religionskollegien*. The *Grundlehren* is the high point of his treatment of this problem. Scripture was now analyzed from the perspective of the principle of tradition, offering dogmatic norms for interpretation. Sailer insisted that

³³ J. M. Sailer, "Religionskollegien," *Geist des Christentums und des Katholizismus: Ausgewählte Schriften katholischer Theologie im Zeitalter des deutschen Idealismus und der Romantik* (ed. J. R. Geiselmann; Mainz: Grünewald, 1940); Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 99; Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1805) 380.

³⁴ Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 119, 130-32; Geiselmann, *Geist des Christentums* 13-35, 37-47; Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1805) 420.

the New Testament was the oldest written record grounded on the orally disseminated apostolic confession of faith. He saw in Scripture a source for the expansion of human consciousness. Scripture was the history of God's dialogue with man through his representatives and, finally, through the God-man created to sanctify all. The essence of this faith was continuously born in the tradition which historically has lived within the Church from the apostolic era before the written record.³⁵

In his early theological career (1779) the Church, accommodating the natural-law theories of the Enlightenment, stood above Scripture and a stabilized tradition. The Church was initially the interpreter of this unchanging deposit of faith to others of different times and cultures. In his later works the Church became immersed in tradition and was viewed as the historical institution that, as it matured, uncovered the formerly obscure meanings of God's word with a magisterium (a body of teachers) now operating as a tool of this living tradition. The Church as a community would continue to exist in time and in varied forms, but the content of the living tradition was ultimately determined through the apostolic deposit and would remain the same, although the form would vary. The organic Church alone protected this deposit, so that the mute words of the apostolic tradition would forever remain animating words, because the Church as mediatrix was both a living and a juridical community. The hierarchy with its juridical duties was ultimately included in Sailer's organic ecclesiology, but now with a function of service to the community. Derived from the vision of an organically and historically dynamic society powered by the religious spirit of the community, Sailer's ecclesiology undoubtedly represented a fresh vision of the Church. Opposed to the lopsidedly institutional and hierarchical structure of the Church that he had originally described in 1779, Sailer ultimately analyzed the uniquely religious content and goal of the whole Church and grounded this ecclesiology on the individual's religious experience stimulated by his life within the community. Man as a member of this organic Church was spiritually more able to discern God's word than was anthropocentric man rationally postulating his God solely for ethical reasons.³⁶

Although he pioneered new perspectives, Sailer had not produced a definitive ecclesiology that proved fully satisfactory to his contempo-

³⁵ Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 133; Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1814) 470; K. Gastgeber, *Gotteswort durch Menschenwort: J. M. Sailer als Erneuerer der Wortverkündigung. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Kerymatik seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Herder, 1964) 129, 143-44, 146-47; *WW* 16, 224, 191.

³⁶ Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 189, 225, 245-49; K. McNamara, "From Möhler to Vatican II: The Modern Movement in Ecclesiology," *Vatican II, The Constitution on the Church: A Theological and Pastoral Commentary* (ed. K. McNamara; Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1968) 9-35.

raries. He was never able to reveal what to some was the ultimate role of the Church. In his view of the origin of Christianity, the Church was only a weak reflection of God, since it only represented what Jesus himself had individualized. The living Church became the guardian of Scripture and the immutable apostolic deposit. Sailer affirmed that the benefits which dogma and the Church for eighteen centuries had effected in all parts of the world should substitute for believers in some measure for that which they had lost because of the separation from the time and place of Christ.³⁷

Sailer, however, came extraordinarily close to a complete analysis of the living Church. But he turned away in favor of devising a theological foundation for the Church which was derived from Scripture and tradition as historical documents, and, in so far as they contained clear proclamations of God's will, they were kept alive in the institution through the centuries. He rejected a construction of the Church which would have made the Church the a priori principle for the understanding of dogma. From Sailer's perspective, the Church had the function of guardian and was the mediate point of departure for theology, and only to the degree that it has maintained the veracity of the historical documents. Theologians during the *Aufklärung* had asked: Must man in view of his speculative capability maintain Scripture and tradition as witnesses clear in themselves? Sailer's epistemology remained burdened with the perspective that Scripture and tradition are witnesses "clear in themselves" which must be carried forward by the community of the faithful. He maintained that the unchanging deposit of faith is truthfully communicated by such as are alive in Christ and enthusiastic members of his community, the Church. In his orientation Sailer was not the complete historicist who embraced the concept of development. But in the stress on the individual experiencing his own faith in responding to God, on the Church as a living community, and on the objective spiritual essence of God's word, communicated by an animate institution in diverse manners through the centuries, Sailer incorporated into his work the main features of the historicist framework, though never fully delineated with respect to their full implication, and provided a crucial stimulus for the innovative theology of Drey and the entire Tübingen school.

DREY

Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853) advanced the concept of living religion by stressing that God's message, based on historical revelation, has become more fully understood through the ages.³⁸ Sailer made this

³⁷ Sailer, *Grundlehren* (1814) 430; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Religiosität* 251.

³⁸ J. R. Geiselmann, "Die Glaubenswissenschaft der katholischen Tübinger Schule in ihrer Grundlegung durch Sebastian v. Drey," *TQ* 111 (1930) 85-86.

viewpoint possible by his insistence that the Church was a living institution "ever new, ever old." Inspired by Sailer's revitalization of religion, this early Tübinger analyzed the continuity and growth of man's religious consciousness in the context of the historicism emerging from the Aufklärung and reinforced by romantic idealism.

In his *Mein Tagebuch über philosophische, theologische und historische Gegenstände* (1812-17), Drey³⁹ revealed his commitment to a genetic conception of history and tradition as well as to the use of the philosophical dialectic in his analysis of religion. He also relied heavily on Schelling's analysis of the life of consciousness. For Drey, present traditions developed from past historical realities. Carried on by the people whose genius they express, they are living. Christianity as a positive religious response to God, Drey maintained, is a temporal appearance, a deed. Theology as such does not deal with abstract principles but with the historical acts of God and man. The historical phenomenon is not a mere fact but one event in a series. There is an interconnection of events, and this provides a unique historical experience for man and his institutions.⁴⁰

Drey offered a classic example of the theory of development, viewing the process as analogous to the growth of a seed. Essentially this viewpoint was a combination of B. Gular's notion of the "revealedness" of the doctrines of revelation and Schelling's philosophy of history. In his "Vom Geist und Wesen des Katholizismus" (1819) Drey perceptively insisted

³⁹ For evaluations of the role of the Tübingen school in modern theology, see J. R. Geiselmann, *Die katholische Tübinger Schule: Ihre theologische Eigenart* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964) 12-13; J. B. Sägmüller, "Die wissenschaftliche kirchliche Richtung von Joh. Adam Möhler und seiner Schule," *Der Aar* 1 (1910-11) 209; P. Funk, "Die katholische Tübinger Schule," *Der Schwäbische Bund* 1 (1919) 297; F. Vigener, "Gallikanismus und episkopalistische Strömungen im deutschen Katholizismus zwischen Tridentinum und Vaticanum," *Historische Zeitschrift* 140 (1913) 555; G. Goyau, "L'Allemagne religieuse au l'école catholique de Tubingue et les origines du modernisme," *RSR* 9 (1919) 387; J. S. von Drey, *Kurze Einleitung in das Studium der Theologie mit Rücksicht auf den wissenschaftlichen Standpunkt und das katholische System* (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1819) 34; J. B. Sägmüller, "Johann Sebastian Drey," *Catholic Encyclopedia* 5 (1909) 159-60; M. Csaky, "Johann Sebastian Drey," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 4 (1967) 1060-61; S. Lösch, *Die Anfänge der Tübinger Theologischen Quartalschrift (1819-1831): Gedenkgabe zum 100. Todestag Joh. Ad. Möhlers* (Rottenburg A. N.: Bader, 1938); J. R. Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Glaube aus geheiligter Überlieferung: Der Grundgedanke der Theologie Johann Adam Möhlers und der katholischen Tübinger Schule* (1st ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1942; 2nd ed., 1966); R. Reinhart, "Die katholisch-theologische Fakultät Tübingen im 19. Jahrhundert: Faktoren und Phasen ihrer Entwicklung," *Kirche und Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert: Referate und Berichte des Arbeitskreises Katholische Theologie* (ed. G. Schwaiger; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975) 55-87; P. Stockmeier, "Die Kirchenväter und die kath. Tübinger Schule," *Theologie im Wandel* (ed. Ratzinger) 139.

⁴⁰ W. Kasper, "Verständnis der Theologie damals und heute," *Theologie im Wandel* 96-

that the concept of tradition was the organic and animate unfolding of historically given revelation. This realization was especially important since it offered him an explanation for the inner continuity so crucial in living Catholicism. The basis for Drey's interpretation was an organic and historical frame of reference that made possible the uninterrupted persistence and formal development of even the primal deposit of revelation, appearing anew in each generation.

Impressed by Schelling's diagnosis of the all-pervasive *Urgrund*, Drey insisted that everything finite is based on an eternal and absolute ground, but that this is God. Man as creature originates from this *Grund und Fundamentum*, but he has a principle of freedom intrinsic to his personality that is independent even with respect to God.⁴¹ Unlike Schelling, Drey maintained that development occurs only in man's consciousness of God, not in God Himself. Drey's theological system rests on the separation of man from the omnipotent God who reveals His truth to man continuously in history.

In Drey's opinion, the historically verified tendency to social unity cannot be separated from the essence of man; it is based ultimately on the consciousness of his total dependence on the *Urgrund* of all things. Human dependence, based on man's participation in total being, is made personal through the act of creation. Society continues the historical development of this original consciousness so primary to the human condition. Hence there is in the natural and preconscious primitive state of man no community in the accepted sense. With the awakening of his self-consciousness as he becomes human, man focuses his intellectual processes necessarily on the total religious determinedness given to him through the act of creation and God's initial revelation. This rise in consciousness is concomitant with the establishment of a human community, because man possesses along with the consciousness of God an understanding of the reality of the world with all of its structural interrelationships. Like most of the German idealists, Drey also found in human self-consciousness an important instrument for the understanding of man's relationship to God. At creation the human spirit has an original inclination toward God which materializes in religion and reinforces the universal connection of all being to the *Urgrund* from which all creation gains support. This interconnection of creation with God becomes in Drey's theology the historical kingdom of God in all of its richly multiple

⁴¹ J. S. von Drey, *Kurze Einleitung* 1; J. S. von Drey, *Die Apologetik als wissenschaftliche Nachweisung der Göttlichkeit des Christentums in seiner Erscheinung* (3 vols.; 2nd ed.; Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1844-1847) 1, 103, 111, 128; J. Rief, *Reich Gottes und Gesellschaft nach Johann Sebastian Drey und Johann Baptist Hirscher* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1965) 222-23; F. Schelling, *Werke* (ed. Manfred Schröter; 14 vols.; Munich: Beck, 1927) 4, 254-56, 267, 295.

dimensions.⁴² Simultaneously, as man's consciousness expands, his expression of these eternal truths becomes more detailed as it reflects his surroundings.

Drey appealed specifically to the testimony of the Old Testament as the primal embodiment of the narrative which describes how the first human beings developed their awareness of God as well as how they formulated the initial elements of their religious feeling in the process of being stimulated by God's word and remaining under His direct guidance. Religion was initially mediated through God's word and presence and became a reality grounded in revelation. The varieties of human consciousness and the concretization in Scripture of these ways of understanding God proved to Drey the great antiquity and originality of this religious tradition. Original revelation, it seemed, was an intimately personal encounter. It was in a real sense a dialogue with the Creator, since God made His appearance to man in a very natural manner. Conscience as revelation also appears as the announced will of God, as the call of the infinite Spirit to the finite, as the living word whispered within man, as the admonition of law to man urging ethical freedom.⁴³ This objective revelation is a verifiable and historical communication from God to man, not a subjective manifestation of man's consciousness.

Even though the unchangeable God is the original stimulus, the forms of religion and tradition are not static. Drey stated that if tradition living in the family, for example, were the bulwark that protected primitive revelation, then tradition further developed with the coalescence of the tribes of Israel into a nation after the Flood. The expression of this tradition, therefore, changed as the social structures characteristic of human history were transformed. Drey based this evolution on the historicist and romantic precept that there persists a characteristic national spirit for each people. Hence, the rise of different nations into prominence necessarily introduced change and differentiation into religion and into the expression of religious tradition, just as universal human consciousness assumed a concrete form reflected in the peculiar characteristics of the various peoples. Similarly, since it is possible for a nation to achieve distinction from others without a language which corresponds to its own characteristic spirit, so too such a historical evolution would be impossible without a differentiation from other faiths and the development of the nation's religion. The help of original revelation was necessary for the development of its own religion, and for the development of objective religious concepts at the very beginning. Hence, even with historical differentiation, humanity still maintained a common reli-

⁴² Rief, *Reich Gottes* 13, 243-244; Drey, *Apologetik* 1, 4; Drey, *Einleitung* 2, 15.

⁴³ Drey, *Einleitung* 1, 181; Geiselman, *Geist des Christentums* 246; Rief, *Reich Gottes* 108; Geiselman, "Glaubenswissenschaft" 114.

gious heritage, though in varied forms. That original deposit of revelation became the basis for all further historical development up to Christianity. With the emergence into consciousness of what characterized each people, it was inevitable that varying notions were formed of the primitive revelation. Out of what was originally a single religion for all, there evolved various national religions corresponding to the cultural spirit of each people. In this way primal tradition and its content became the starting point for all further developments among nations and peoples. This explains how the content of this common tradition in man's religious and historical roots recurs in the ancient stories of nearly all peoples and in many different forms. Always these traditions are shaped to suit the particular community, yet with minimal loss to the essence in this transformation. Ultimately, only in the forms of religion and tradition did Drey see change. In one sense, of course, this change is development. As each person deepens his own religious consciousness through historical experience, man also expands his consciousness of God. Not surprisingly, in Drey's work there is an all-consuming interest in historical development and in its meaning for revelation contained in tradition. Through Fenelon this idea of living tradition passed to Sailer, then to Drey, and ultimately would be transmitted within a historicist framework to Möhler and the entire Catholic school of Tübingen.⁴⁴ The living faith was objectively experienced. This objective dialogue between man and God has persisted up to the present.

Drey's emphasis on historical consciousness, already present in the *Aufklärung*, merged experiential faith delineated by Sailer with Schellingian historical objectivism into a Catholic synthesis. Drey insisted on original revelation and on the progressive and temporal unfolding of this revelation. In light of this, Drey labeled the creation of the first man as in its own way a human-becoming of God. Ultimately the systematic, scholarly treatment of faith has a historical character in so far as revelation occurs in time and emerges as man's consciousness matures. The historical and ever-deepening rational comprehension of the truths of revelation creates for theology the material basis. In short, the common point of contact for the revelation event and systematic theology is that both find their roots in history. Drey's ecclesiology, stressing development and the organic connection of individual dogma to the fundamental idea of Christianity, reflected the *Idee* of the kingdom of God. The basis for Catholic theology, he felt, was the deed of God: *das Reich Gottes*. This analysis of faith had as its function the study of historical belief through the standard use of man's cognitive powers, a necessary prelude to

⁴⁴ Y. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and a Theological Essay* (New York: Burns and Oates, 1966) 191; J. R. Geiselman, *The Meaning of Tradition* (Freiburg: Herder, 1966) 51-52; Drey, *Apologetik* 1, 39, 41-42.

understanding the *Reich Gottes* as a moral order. In every epoch dogmatic theology analyzed tradition and revelation on the basis of the established facts, organized these conceptually, and internally connected all these patterns into a scholarly system.⁴⁵

Combined with his adherence to Schelling's transcendental idealism, Drey found in historicism with its stress on organic development a crucial insight that enabled him to propose a fruitful view of Catholic dogma. In 1819 he wrote in the first issue of the *Theologische Quartalschrift* how Catholicism must change its perspective to reflect contemporary viewpoints:

Just as the feeling of being and living is itself first and primordial instead of being generated by the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum*, and just as this feeling renews itself with the consciousness of substantial identity in every utterance of the power of life, so the self-knowledge, the self-consciousness of primordial Christianity in Catholicism passes through all the centuries on the basis of the unchangeable substrata of an unbroken and ever self-identical objective foundation.

Despite Drey's affirmation of free individual actions, history in its entirety was for him powered by the necessary dictates of Providence. Accordingly, each unique event was a necessary act in so far as it was permitted or determined by Providence. Likewise, theology was the scholarly study of the Church's life viewed as a living organism powered by Christ. In essence, Catholic theology was defined by Drey as the analysis of the Christian faith through knowledge based on the life of the Catholic Church with its divinely appointed goal and deposit of faith. With this knowledge the Church can mature both speculatively through its theological systems as well as historically, and its significance can be understood in accord with the original intention of Christ. The foundation for legitimate theological knowledge is the Church based upon the Christian *Idee* (God's word). Without this basis theological concepts are rootless and lost in ethereal speculation. In light of this, he insisted that the institutional Church had developed under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Adhering to Sailer's view of living religion and the perspectives derived from romanticism, Drey categorically opposed the eighteenth-century speculative dogmatic systems influenced solely by natural law and rationalism. His theology was inspired by Schelling's romantic concept of history with its development of consciousness, an outgrowth of the *Aufklärung*.⁴⁶ Hence theology for Drey was the systematic unfold-

⁴⁵ Geiselmann, *Tübinger Schule* 281, 285; Geiselmann, *Geist des Christentums* 86; J. S. von Drey, "Rezension: D. Mariani Dobmayer, *Theologia Dogmatica*, Tom. I, Soliosbaci, 1818," *TQ* 1 (1819) 424; P. Hünermann, "Der Reflex des deutschen Idealismus in der Theologie der katholischen Tübinger Schule," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 73 (1965) 59; Drey, *Einleitung* 40, 166-67; Geiselmann, "Glaubenswissenschaft" 97-98.

⁴⁶ Geiselmann, "Glaubenswissenschaft" 55-56; J. S. Drey, "Revision des gegenwärtigen

ing of historical revelation in relation to man's intellectual capacities.

At home in the world of Schelling and Schleiermacher, Drey insisted that Catholic systems of theology be academically sound. In his view, however, Catholic theology had to be connected to the Church's life. Since religious life within the Church was maturing, changing, and living, theology had to reflect this dynamism. Theologians should not simply dissolve their analyses of the Church's life into a formless mysticism or organize their systems along the lines of rationalistic criticism. Flexibility in a maturing theology had to conform to the dynamic spirit in the ecclesial society, yet the divinely ordered development of the Church and the orthodox unfolding of dogma had to occur in the context of the immutable truth present at creation. Revelation transmitted through historically unfolding tradition would produce true dogma relevant to the specific era. He states in "Vom Geist und Wesen":

Catholicism holds fast unchangeably to the essence and form of Christianity in a unique image. This image is its very history, a living and unbroken whole that extends through the whole Christian era. . . . On this as a foundation Catholicism not only permits but even holds as necessary . . . both the philosophical construction and the reflective historical criticism of Christianity. Through the former it forms for itself the science of Christianity, which from time immemorial it has possessed in a form indubitably as rigorous as that of Gnosticism and much more rigorous than that of later heresy. Through the latter it fashions for itself a clear image of each single datum or period in the long course of its development. Thus it satisfies reason, which seeks the highest unity of principles, as well as the legitimate demands of understanding, which busies itself with the individual; above all, though, it answers to the need of an objective faith and a profound reverence for divine revelation.⁴⁷

Theology corresponding to contemporary patterns of thought could be developed in a historical Church. Dogmatic expressions of revelation, therefore, could change as the historical circumstances of man's dialogue with God varied according to time and place, although the essence of God's message was eternal, existing even before the institutional Church.

Drey's ecclesiology emphasizing tradition would not be complete without his unique viewpoint on reason and revelation as both historically developed in ever-deepening human consciousness. With few exceptions, the dominant viewpoint in Drey's era was that dogma was to be considered a system stillborn 1800 years before and protectively swaddled by a network of restrictive bonds. Drey uncovered within this corpse a living

Zustandes der Theologie," *Archiv für die Pastoralkonferenzen in den Landkapiteln des Bistums Konstanz* 1 (1812) 16, 23; W. Ruf, *Johann Sebastian Dreys System der Theologie als Begründung der Moralthologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974) 76-77.

⁴⁷ Hünermann, "Reflex" 51-53; Schelling, *Werke* 3, 321; Drey, *Einleitung* iii-viii; Drey, *Apologetik*, 1, 4.

organism. Progress had infatuated the Aufklärer, and now within a historicist framework and romantic idealism it appeared in Catholic theology. Progress in religious consciousness and the development of dogma need not risk adventure, thought Drey, but could evolve within the security of spontaneous, natural, organic growth under the proper guidance of informed persons treasuring God's objective revelation.

Drey, and later his fellow Tübingen theologians, set forth a fresh understanding of the Church as a historically and dynamically growing reality, an earthly institution embodying the biblical concept of the kingdom of God and its living tradition continually developing and transmitting God's word to mankind. The proclamation of the word through the Church and the dispensation of grace to individual persons are acts which benefit the society and have essentially a social nature as they externalize the life of the Church. Hence the Church as a temporal institution represents a moment in that process which Drey describes as the becoming real of an ideal. In this Church societal intercourse and the natural drive for the communication of the kerygma is realized, intensified through belief, and directed toward saving human persons. The historical Church is the vehicle for the idea as it becomes real. The faith, which is essentially focused on Jesus Christ, has a subjective basis in human minds, initiated through historical investigation, as well as an objective foundation in the Lord continuing his work and life in the Church.⁴⁸

In Drey's concept of tradition, history allowed formal development and the expansion of the human consciousness of God, not just the preservation of the original message up to the present. In the existing institutional Church the original act itself is present, only now more fully known because of development during each successive generation. History was continuous, and he maintained that earlier levels of consciousness were subsumed into each stage of the progressive development. Through analyzing the course of pre-Christian and non-Judaic revelation, in which God's proclamation is uniquely found, as well as New Testament Christianity, Drey uncovered a historical religion in which God's word became more fully understood as man has developed.⁴⁹

To a historical Church Drey connected tradition as it developed in the community (*Gemeinde*) of the faithful, which continuously nurtured and proclaimed the message of the apostles. Between the Church and tradition existed a symbiotic relationship, since incorruptible and divinely

⁴⁸ Hans Küng, *Wozu Priester? Eine Hilfe* (Cologne: Benziger, 1971); Hans Küng, *Infalible? An Inquiry* (New York: Doubleday, 1971); Küng, *The Council, Reform and Reunion*; Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: The Unknown Council* (New York: Hawthorne, 1967); Rief, *Reich Gottes* 267-68; Drey, *Apologetik* 3, 9, 67-68, 83-84.

⁴⁹ Drey, *Apologetik* 1, 1; Geiselman, *Lebendiger Glaube* (1942) 207; Rief, *Reich Gottes* 269-70.

mediate tradition is possible only through the Church. Christian revelation was also from the very beginning explicit in the dogma of the Church and implicitly transmitted to men through such channels as the liturgy. Drey's ecclesiology was shaped, then, by the theological implications of living and developing tradition, so much so that the analysis of tradition as God's word coincided with his study of the Church. The theology of living tradition was nourished only when essentially connected to the Christian community (the Church), in which men were constantly concerned with comprehending and living God's word.⁵⁰ God, moreover, still continues intervening through the hierarchical authority that he has established.

Despite his description of the Christian community as organic, Drey did not depict the magisterium of the Church as a natural outgrowth of the *Gemeinde*. Imitating Schelling's dialectic of mutual interaction, Drey in his *Kurze Einleitung* repudiated any one-sided interior development through the work of the Holy Spirit, as well as any arbitrary initiative directed by the ecclesiastical authorities without reliance on tradition to interpret independently the revealed essence. The magisterium had to respect tradition as the encapsulization of revelation and was to govern with a view to service rather than dominance. Through his analysis of Christian tradition, Drey found the ecclesial authority uniquely originating in the message of Jesus. The Christian community did not originally create its own magisterium, for this element of the Church was established by Christ before the community was formed. The teaching office of the mission of the apostles was instituted by Christ as founder of the Church to provide an initial structure and safeguard revelation for the Christian community. Drey emphasized that an understanding of the organic community of the Church was necessary to grasp the essence of the institution and its offices. The configurations of the magisterium or the community may vary historically, but the relationship of service for the propagation of the message to the faithful in the Church must remain intact as the primary responsibility of the teaching authority. When he instituted his Church, Christ designated the community as the future bearer of tradition and communicated to it his kerygma. Through announcing the "good news," his disciples and their successors converted others to share in Christ's message as they continued to develop its full meaning. For Drey, then, the Church was no merely juridical administration; it is a community through which the living revelation-tradition has been passed down from generation to generation, unchanged in essence as the meaning of God's word unfolds more completely. The Church is the societal framework within which the historical revelation has been mediated into succeeding epochs. On a more concrete level, the Church

⁵⁰ Geiselman, *Lebendiger Glaube* (1966) 222-23; Drey, *Apologetik* 3, 1, 22.

is also visibly revelation itself in its current form, a constantly living objectivity, immediately observable. Revelation as objective religion is necessarily rooted, Drey maintained, in the Church. In Christianity this means that the Church, viewed holistically, is the unbroken continuation of the original Christian drama. Hence an institutional Church is necessary. In Catholicism the kerygma (*Urchristentum*) perdures as a factual entity. The theologian can conceptualize historical Christianity in the present only when he can synthesize the positive and historical aspects of Christianity as they interfold with and grow from one another organically. This organic, romantic historicism became for Drey the means to maintain an institutional Church in which dogmatic formulations based on revelation can continue being explicated according to the needs of the time. In a real sense, only dogmatic *formulae* became relative in this context.⁵¹

Drey defined the essential nature of the Church not as something found in an unchanging universe of ideas but only in the real history of the Christian community. Impressed by Schelling's analysis of the historical growth of consciousness, Drey passed beyond Sailer's experiential and organic paradigm. The actual Church not only possesses a history; it exists through its objective history, not merely through the subjective experiences of its members as they perceive the original deposit of faith, borne by the Church through the ages. There is no "doctrine" simply reflecting an unalterable metaphysical and ontological system, but only one which is mediated within the framework of the historical Church with its mutable theologies. Ecclesiology must be created anew and is composed to meet the changing needs of the historical people of God by dialectically updating formulation and terminology as a means to expose more fully God's message to each generation. A specific ecclesiology should be the theologian's response to his historical matrix, involving the conjunction of the intellectual, political, social, and religious forces which compose his era.⁵² Building on Sailer's religious and ethical Church nourishing its members alive in Christ, Drey objectively rooted a historicist ecclesiology in the soil of German romantic idealism stressing a spiritual consciousness temporally unfolding within a developing society. Most significantly, however, the truth or values embodied at each level of spiritual development must remain identical with the initial essence, only now more clearly known or distinctively understood in the later stages. The original seed unfolds so that the essential truth is more fully comprehended as man's consciousness historically progresses. Drey as-

⁵¹ Drey, *Apologetik* 3, 68; Geiselmann, *Lebendiger Glaube* (1966) 137-38, 243; Drey, "Vom Geist," *Geist des Christentums* (ed. Geiselmann) 195-96, 201; W. Kasper, "Dogmatik als Wissenschaft: Versuch einer Neubegründung," *TQ* 3 (1977) 195.

⁵² Küng, *The Church* 13.

serted that the kerygma was transmitted in conscious tradition and that the essence of Christ's message has developed or become more clarified through the historical Church, an institution capable of thriving under any ideology and in the pluralistic sociopolitical order that has characterized human development.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An emphasis on progressive growth or development from a past to a future offered a unique historicist perception of the Church's life, which has proven fruitful during the last two centuries. German Catholic theology was nourished by the intellectual forces gaining strength during the *Aufklärung*. In the midst of such rational deductive analyses as that of Benedict Stattler and such ecclesial reform movements as that of Febronius, the theologians Sailer and Drey, interested in reform, offered options reflecting other levels of the *Aufklärung*. The result was a historicist ecclesiology and epistemology, which stressed individualism for the person as well as for the societal organism. Likewise, progressive historical consciousness, organic development, and a living community unfolding the meaning of God's word in revelation-tradition composed the new parameters of theological speculation established by these reformers.

The expression "living tradition" was not invented by Sailer and the Catholic Tübingen school, but is occasionally found in the Fathers as well as in papal and conciliar documents. Such appearances, however, do not provide the range of application found by Sailer and Drey. The terms "living tradition" and "living Gospel" also appear with the Catholic adversaries of the Protestant Reformation. In the Jansenist controversy some argued from the basis of "living tradition" and maintained that express statements in source material could not be the final arbiters of Church teaching. In essence, the magisterium can pronounce doctrinal truth and condemn concrete errors in the context of history and its concrete demands. The concept of "living tradition" reached Sailer and Drey after a long history of its own. But their consciousness of history and feeling served to undergird a modern analysis of revelation, tradition, and the Church as well as the interactions of all three.⁵³

The climate for this ecclesiological transformation existed because of the interaction among historicism, romanticism, and idealism in Germany from 1770-1840. But without Drey and Sailer it is unlikely that the metamorphosis would have occurred so quickly and taken root so effectively. This aspect of development, still absent from the Tridentine

⁵³ Congar 190-91; H. Ranft, "La tradition vivante: Unité et développement," *L'Église est une* (ed. P. Chaillet; Paris: Bloud Gay, 1938) 102-26; J. Chaillet, "La tradition vivante," *RSPT* 27 (1938) 161-83.

affirmation on apostolic tradition, is clearly marked in Sailer's, Drey's, and, of course, Möhler's works. The development is not purely dialectical but arises from the demands of Christian allegiance.

Sailer and the Tübingen school fostered by Drey provide a unique case of theological vitality during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. With the exception of Sailer and the Tübingen school, there was little enduring religious scholarship during this period. Guided by their insights, the theology of the magisterium could now be analyzed with greater rigor with respect to its connection to the Church as a community. The conception of dogmatic development began to find its place in religious thought. Fundamentally, tradition became but one instance of the Church's mystery in its totality. The Church is human and divine, an object of history and of supernatural faith. Scripture, tradition, and the Church must be studied as elements in relation to one another.

In wrestling with this perennial problem of the weight to be given Scripture and tradition, Drey and (to a degree) Sailer discovered that historical development within a living Church offered a well-balanced solution. In essence, the first stage of God's revealing action was the definitive formation of an objective deposit; the second was the gospel's flowering in a personal human subject throughout an endlessly varied history. Scripture is what was posited once for all. The Church's tradition, conceived not just as a material object but as the active presence of revelation in a living subject by the power of the Holy Spirit, represents what is as yet unfulfilled in the word of God. Scripture must be read within the Church, i.e., within tradition. Both Scripture and tradition are to be combined and referred to each other. Sailer and Drey constructed a historicist frame of reference within which elements of God's message to man could be mutually related to one another.

Guided by the experiential stress of the *Sturm und Drang* period, Sailer produced an ecclesiology with a vital and dynamic relationship between the individual and God. The Church as the community of the faithful could not remain simply a legalistic institution failing to reflect this new life. Sailer's perception of a living Church was based to a considerable extent on his reintroduction of an emotional love into Christian life. The Church was to guard Scripture and the apostolic deposit. But in the process Sailer's Church offered to contemporaries merely a reflection of God, since it only represented what Christ had historically done. The Church was a shadow of what believers had lost because of their separation from the life and time of Christ. Admiring Sailer's contributions to the revitalization of religion, Drey focused on the mystery of God living in His Church through revelation and tradition. Drey and his successors stressed that the historical God-man Jesus Christ continuously lived in the Church. Human understanding of this mystery unfolded as man's consciousness developed historically.

Both Sailer and Drey decidedly transformed the ecclesiology of the Church. In essence, at least for Drey, the Church was revelation. Along with this ecclesiology, both Sailer and Drey treated the issue of revelation and tradition within their historicist, romantic, and idealistic *Weltanschauung*. In the process the Catholic concept of revealed religion was modernized and could survive in the midst of the philosophical onslaughts questioning religion which were gaining momentum during the *Goethezeit*. A fresh image of the Church ultimately resulted in revised insights into the essence of Christianity as well as of religion in general and has proven useful to such theologians as Küng, Rahner, and Congar presently concerned with understanding the structure and mission of the Church.