

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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BY C. GOLDSBOROUGH ANDERSON.

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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SCHILLER'S RELIGION.

BY W. H. CARRUTH.

IN view of the great changes which have taken place since Schiller's death, both in religious thought and in the average standpoint of the professional exponents of religion, a review of the judgments of Schiller in this respect seems called for, and this the more since it is reasonable to assume that no new material is now likely to come to light either from the pen of Schiller himself or from those of his competent contemporaries.

The labels "rationalist," "skeptical," "atheist," "deist," "infidel," which were once applied so freely and so indiscriminately to any one who differed in religious opinion from those who applied the labels, have changed their meaning or lost much of their reproach, and need to be examined and readjusted, if not thrown into the waste-basket altogether.

In the eighteenth century the doctrine "orthodoxy is my -doxy" went so far as to deny the name of religion to any but the Christian and ancient Hebrew faiths; indeed the more zealous members of the two great camps of Christendom inclined to deny the name to each other, to Protestantism and Catholicism as the case might be. Christianity was religion: all other beliefs were "superstitions," "paganism," and their adherents "infidels." At the same time it was quite common to confuse under the one common name of religion three more or less distinct things: theology, or the *theories about religion*; the Church, or the *outward forms and institutions of religion*; and the personal life and walk of the individual, his relation to God. Indeed it was rather the first two of these which were commonly meant when religion was under discussion.

In his *German Culture and Christianity*, London, 1882, Joseph

Gostwick says apologetically of Schiller: "As regards his unbelief, he must be classed with the more respectable rationalists." And of his middle life he says: "The poet, naturally a proud man, learned to look down with contempt on everything that in his boyhood had been believed." And as a sort of final judgment: "When the saying is once more repeated that for Schiller independent culture takes the place of religion, the truth of the conclusion is obvious, though it may require some qualification." This qualification is found in the statement at the end of the chapter on Schiller, that "there may be found passages in his later prose writings to support our opinion that near the close of his life he was led to think with reverence of religion." This judgment of Gostwick's may stand as a fair sample of the conservative view of Schiller's religion, and this by one who is partial to the poet and would fain count him as a fellow-believer.

On the other hand, there have not been wanting genial and charitable enthusiasts who have claimed Schiller as inherently a good Christian. Schlurick, for instance, in his *Schiller und die Bibel* says: "But his heart was richly impregnated with the spirit of the Bible and of Christianity." And Roscher, in his *Geistliche Gedanken eines Nationalökonoms*, expresses the opinion that Schiller "needed only to have his eyes opened (*bedurfte nur eines kleinen Starstiches*) in order to quickly become a very good Christian." It is hardly worth while to mention those suspicious orthodox of an older day who accused Schiller of a secret leaning toward Catholicism, or even of actual entrance into the mother Church, basing their suspicions, of course, on the poet's serious and reverent treatment of the Catholic rites in *Maria Stuart* and *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.

Judgments of this sort once become current and conventional maintain themselves often for considerable periods among people who would by no means formulate them on their own account. Thus the orthodox opinion of the eighteenth century concerning Schiller's religion prevailed to some extent throughout the nineteenth century and is accepted to-day by those who are not disposed to re-examine the judgments of the past.

It is important to bear in mind, in considering Schiller's utterances on the subject of religion, that he himself was in some measure a victim of this religious astigmatism, or, if not, that he used the word religion frequently in the same partial senses as did his contemporaries, in order to be understood by them.

Moreover, we must ourselves learn to distinguish between the

poet's theological speculations, his sympathetic imaginings, and his deep convictions, which are to be judged chiefly by his life. So greatly has the religious climate of the present time changed, that the life seems now to be regarded as almost the only religious manifestation worth considering, if we may judge from certain recent biographies of Schiller, which abstain from all reference to the poet's religion distinctly as such.

Some light is thrown upon the religious development of Friedrich Schiller by the religious conditions surrounding his youth. His father and mother were sincerely pious adherents of the official Lutheran Church. They do not seem to have taken any interest in matters of doctrine. On the contrary, their religion was a simple matter of obeying the laws, worshiping their God, and observing the rites of the Church. In this simple religion they reared their children. The fact that they early destined Friedrich for the pulpit is not so much a proof that they were exceptionally devoted to the spread of the Gospel as that they approved of the ministry as a safe and useful calling. Young Friedrich's precocious predilection for improvising pulpits out of chairs and preaching at his playmates is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that he knew his parents' wish in the matter.

Under the influence of Pastor Moser, a truly zealous and benignant soul, it may well be that Schiller's piety sent down some roots into his youthful mind. But at the age of eleven he was brought under the instruction of the shallow and bigoted Zilling, whose insistence on the incomprehensible elements of the catechism undoubtedly sowed the seeds of dissent in the breast of the child he was preparing for confirmation. The unfavorable impression caused by this official representative of religion was supported in a positive way by the reading of Herder, Lessing, Rousseau, Mendelssohn, and Garve's comments on Ferguson.

These philosophical writers were the strongest influence upon Schiller's thought from his fifteenth to his twentieth year. But there is no reason to believe that the change to more liberal views was accompanied by any deep spiritual convulsions, such as those through which religious dissenters in Scotland or New England passed a generation later. *Die Räuber* and *Resignation* show clearly that he felt painfully the breach with the faith of his childhood. But if ever he passed through a spiritual "slough of despond" it was in the years 1783 to 1787, when his doubts were newest and strongest and at the same time his outward circumstances most depressing. Yet Schiller's enthusiastic and sanguine temperament

seems to have prevented his ever sinking into the depths of "the everlasting Nay," or at least his tarrying there any length of time. This was also due to the fact that the dogmas which he found himself obliged to surrender had never been deeply insisted on at home, or by those he loved, as necessary to salvation.

The sources for a judgment of Schiller's religious convictions must be: (1) The declarations of his contemporaries; (2) his own writings; (3) his life.

Of these the second and third are of vastly greater validity and importance than the first. Moreover, the utterances of really competent persons regarding Schiller's distinctly religious views and convictions are singularly scant, so far as I have been able to investigate, excepting for his youth, when in the nature of the case they are much less significant.

Of utterances by others regarding his religion, decidedly the most distinct is that of Karoline von Wolzogen, in her *Life of Schiller*:

"The universal significance of Christianity, the pure and holy personality of its founder, the infinite profundity of Nature filled him with reverence, which became more and more deep and sincere toward the end of his life. Truth and love were the religion of his heart, its result the striving after the purest things of earth and after the infinite and eternal—the true life of his spirit—which, despite its short stay on earth, left in all souls that could appreciate the higher life the conviction that few were ever nobler or had exercised a richer and more enduring activity than he."

This might serve as a summary of all that we can accumulate from Schiller's own utterances. Next to this stands the testimony of the one man best fitted to judge calmly and well, Goethe: "This Christ-spirit (*Tendenz*) was innate in Schiller. He touched nothing common without ennobling it"—to Zelter (9, XI) 1830. This is really better than the two beautiful lines of the *Epilog zum Lied von der Glocke*:

"Denn hinter ihm, in wesenlosem Scheine
Lag, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine."

This utterance of Goethe's is a double tribute, and the fuller of meaning for Schiller because Goethe was not wont to recognize or to pay tribute to the Christ-ideal.

As against these judgments of two of the most competent contemporaries I know of practically no opposite opinion based upon personal acquaintance with the man, but only such as arose in the criticism of Schiller's works, such for instance as Stolberg's review

of *Die Götter Griechenlands* in the *Deutsches Museum*, wherein he charges Schiller with blasphemy. But we are as competent as any one to form an opinion on the poet's published works, and hence we need not consider these charges.

In attempting to judge of Schiller's religion from his published and written words we shall group these under (1) letters; (2) essays and histories; (3) lyrics and ballads; (4) dramas and prose fiction. Translations may clearly be left out of account.

Utterances found in the first two of these groups may reasonably be taken at their face value, subject to a few minor deductions to be mentioned later. Lyrics and gnomic verse are much more surely the genuine expression of the poet's thought than ballads. In the ballad, especially when it is of a narrative or even dramatic character, we must hesitate to identify the sentiments of the personages with those of the poet himself. Finally, for the dramas and narrative fiction of the rules of interpretation must vary somewhat with the individual piece. In general, it may be safe to attribute to the poet the sentiments of the nobler personages—those who are plainly the poet's favorites, Karl Moor, Luise, Posa, Max Piccolomini, Maria Stuart, Paulet, Johanna—and to hold him guiltless of the sentiments expressed by the villains, such as Franz Moor, von Walther, Philipp, Gessler, and others. But in the case of commonplace and colorless characters, and those made up of good and evil, such as Fiesko, Don Karlos, Wallenstein, and the brothers in *Die Braut von Messina*, it is questionable whether we are justified in attributing any of their sentiments to the poet himself,—certainly not if these sentiments are clearly in conflict with sentiments expressed by the poet when writing *in propria persona*.

In saying this I do not ignore the fact that a man may harbor and even express conflicting sentiments. But we may trust the more permanent quality of those set down deliberately in letters and essays and histories. The evidence of the dramas is good when confirmatory of these testimonies, doubtful when it conflicts with them.

RELIGION.

On the subject of religion in general, apart from the special form of it which prevailed in his environment, Schiller has many serious thoughts, showing that he recognized it as one of the fundamental human institutions.

In a letter to Göschen, the publisher, 1792, touching a proposed history of the Reformation, he says: "I should be very sorry to

neglect this splendid opportunity to influence the whole nation in its conception of religion and to bring about by this single book perhaps a profound revolution in matters of belief."

In the Letters to the Duke of Augustenburg on Aesthetic Education it seems at times as though Schiller dreamed that the cult of beauty was to displace religion. But it seems to me that he aims rather at ennobling religion by the cult of beauty than at substituting the one for the other. "Just as the madman in lucid intervals subjects himself voluntarily to bonds,—so we are under obligation when free from the assaults of passion to bind ourselves by religion and æsthetic culture. . . . I have deliberately put religion and taste into the same class here, because both have the merit of serving as a substitute for true virtue. . . . Religion is to the sensual man (the man governed by his senses) what taste is to the refined man—taste is for every-day life, religion is for extreme needs. We must cling to one of these two supports, if not better to both, so long as we are not gods." Very much the same thing is said in a letter to Goethe about *Wilhelm Meister*, 1796. Perhaps the same notion of religion, as dominated by taste, is in his mind when in a letter to Goethe, 1803, about the approaching visit of Madame de Staël, he says, "But it will be a hard matter to portray our religion to her in French phrases."

But that he did not intend to separate his cult of beauty from the religion of his time is shown in a letter to Zelter, 1804, regarding a proposed Academy of Art: "Few feel that it is high time to do something for art, but it is possible to show everybody that the condition of religion cannot remain as it is. And since people are ashamed to have religion themselves and want to pass for emancipated (*aufgeklärt*), we must be very glad if we can aid religion through art. Berlin first lighted the torch of a rational religious freedom in the dark days of superstition. Now in the days of unbelief a different glory is to be won without sacrificing the first: let Berlin now add warmth to light and ennoble Protestantism, of which she is destined to be the metropolis."

In the essay on *Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet*, 1784, occur a number of reflections on the subject of the service of the stage to religion, incidentally revealing the poet's views of religion in general. "To the greater portion of mankind religion is nothing if we take away its symbols, its problems, if we destroy its pictures of heaven and hell, and yet these are mere pictures of the imagination, riddles without solution, scarecrows and baits from the distance. . . . Even before Nathan the Jew and

Saladin the Saracen put us to shame and preached to us the divine doctrine that our devotion to God is not dependent on our notions about God, the stage had planted humanity and gentleness in our hearts."

From the essay *Vom Erhabenen* I take the following: "The divinity, then, represented as a power which is, indeed, able to cancel our existence, but which, while this existence is ours, can exercise no control over the processes of our reason, is dynamically sublime—and only that religion which gives us such a conception of the divinity bears the stamp of sublimity."

Of the more precise nature of his own religion Schiller did not write much, save touching special doctrines and concrete applications. (See, however, p. 334.) Aside from the passages already quoted a few passages from the dramas show that it was to his mind a profound and elemental interest of all living creatures. It is interesting to recall that Schiller wrote *Die Räuber*, according to his own Preface, "to overthrow vice and to avenge religion, morality and civil laws upon their enemies." The dramas are indeed full of the elements of religion. *Don Karlos* is dominated by God's providence and *Wilhelm Tell* by His justice. Ferdinand, in *Kabale und Liebe*, says: "If we can no longer serve God in a temple, the night will come with her inspiring awe, the moon with her changes will preach repentance, and a worshipful church of stars will join us in prayer." Wallenstein exclaims: "There is religion in the instincts of animals, and even the savage will not drink with the victim into whose breast he is about to thrust his knife." And Max says, also in *Wallenstein's Tod*: "O even the fair, sweet promptings of hospitality and of loyal friendship are to the heart a sacred religion." This suggests an expression in a letter to Charlotte von Lengefeld, 1787: "I shall build me an altar here where I can turn my face toward Rndolstadt, for there is my religion and my prophet."

Perhaps the best attempt to state his principles briefly is found in a letter to Erhard, 1795, although he does not call it a summary of his religion: "Ardent for the idea of humanity, kind and humane toward individual men, and indifferent to the race as a whole as I find it—that is my motto."

GOD.

From the letters of the poet's school years we learn that his belief in God and a future life is strong, and that these are the chief articles of his creed. To Boigeol, a schoolmate, who had accused

him of "feeling God only in poetry," which Schiller understood to be a charge of insincerity, he writes resenting the imputation, saying that he has found "a higher friend, who will never fail me," to compensate for the loss of Boigeol. This friend has "commanded me to love you to all eternity," which he will accordingly do, though for the present he proposes to "cut" him. To Captain von Hoven, on the death of his son, Schiller's comrade, the poet writes consolatory phrases about "an eternally wise decree that controls our days" and his hopes of another life, concluding: "These are not conned commonplaces, but the true and genuine feelings of my heart."

From many similar expressions at intervals through his life, I select one from the year 1796, addressed to his father on the recovery of his mother: "In such events I recognize a good Providence that rules over us and my heart is most deeply stirred by it. May Heaven preserve you and deal with us all much better than we can at present hope!" Perhaps there is some ground for regarding such expressions as this as *pro forma*,—not hypocritical, but such as must be used to convey the desired impression to the parents. But if there is one confidence which seems to be unclouded in Schiller's soul, and which has a thousand supports in his poems and dramas, it is the belief in a kind and ruling Providence.

The most explicit of Schiller's utterances on this head are found in his various prose writings, notably in the Julius-Raphael Letters. The *Theosophie des Julius*, 1783-7 which indeed Julius (Schiller) confesses has been somewhat undermined by Raphael (Körner), is a sort of confession of faith, suffused with Spinozist, Platonic pantheism. "The universe is a thought of God: . . . it is the function of thinking beings to find again in this present whole the original sketch (the image of God)". . . . "Harmony, truth, system, beauty, excellence give me pleasure because they put me into the active condition of their inventor, because they betray to me the presence of a reasoning and feeling being and give me a hint of my relation to this being." . . . "Every coming spring yields me a commentary and clue to the whole riddle of death and refutes my anxious fears of an eternal sleep. . . . And so I understand the immanence of God."

"All the perfections of the universe are united in God. God and Nature are two quantities which are precisely equal. . . . Nature is an infinitely subdivided God. As in a prism a beam of white light is split up into seven darker beams, so the divine Ego has split himself up into numberless feeling substances. And as seven darker

rays may combine again into one clear beam, so from the reunion of all these substances a divine being would emerge. . . . The attraction of the elements brought about the physical form of Nature. The attraction of spirits. . . . would needs finally put an end to that separation, or bring forth God. Such an attraction is Love. . . . So Love is the ladder by which we mount to likeness with God."

Later, in 1793, in the essay *Vom Erhabenen*, we find the following: "The divinity, conceived in all its omniscience, which pierces all the windings of the human heart, in its holiness, which tolerates no impure desire, and in its might, which controls our physical existence, is a fearful conception and can therefore become a sublime conception. We can have no physical guarantee against the operations of this power because it is equally impossible for us to evade or to resist it. Therefore there remains only moral certainty, which we base upon the justice of this being and upon our own innocence."

Still later, 1797, in the well known poem, *Die Worte des Glaubens*, he expresses the same faith in a supreme ruler of the universe, while we find also several confident utterances from an earlier period in the hymn *An die Freude* (1785) and in some passages of *Die Künstler* (1789).

In the dramas the thought of God as the genius of justice recurs most frequently. Thus in *Die Räuber*, especially in the mouth of Pastor Moser, "The thought of God rouses a fearful neighbor, whose name is 'judge.'"

It is a matter of course that such personages as Maria Stuart, Thekla, Johanna, Stauffacher, and Tell should express a firm and constant belief in the support of Providence. If their utterances were all we had to judge by we might question their value as evidence for Schiller's own views. But inasmuch as they are in harmony with his views expressed elsewhere, and in view of the quantity and quality of them,* they deserve consideration. Especially in *Wilhelm Tell* are the expressions of faith in the justice of God noteworthy. "There lives a God to punish and avenge." "Oh, the decrees of God are surely just!" "Then I believe God would not let you fall, but show his favor to the righteous cause." "But God is everywhere when justice calls, and all we stand beneath His sheltering sky."

Something is fairly to be inferred from the absence in these

* See a complete collection of these evidences in my paper, *The Religion of Friedrich Schiller*, in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XIX, 4.

dramas of certain features of Christian doctrine, such as the trinity, atonement, etc.

CHRISTIANITY.

In considering Schiller's attitude toward Christianity it will be necessary to distinguish between pure Christianity—the life and precepts of Christ—and historical Christianity—the organized Church and the hierarchy. Of the first Schiller had a high opinion. In a letter to Goethe, 1795, he says: "It seems to me that too little has yet been said about the peculiar character of the Christian religion and of Christian religious fervor; . . . that it has not yet been fully expressed what this religion may be to a sensitive soul, or rather what a sensitive soul can make of it." And later in the same letter: "I find in the Christian religion the potentiality of all that is noblest and best; and the various manifestations of it in life seem to me to be so repellant and foolish merely because they are a blundering exposition of this highest. If we look for the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, the one that distinguishes it from all other monotheistic religions, we find that it lies precisely in the suspension of the law, or of the Kantian imperative, in the place of which Christianity wishes to see established a voluntary and loving consent. It is, therefore, in its pure form a manifestation of beautiful morality, or of the incarnation of the Holy, and in this sense the only æsthetic religion."

In spite of this declaration, Schiller wrote almost no poems inspired by any distinctively Christian sentiment. One exception is *Die Johanner*.

In Schiller's inaugural address as professor of history in Jena, *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* are several strong expressions and implications regarding Christianity, though it may be claimed that public policy dictated them in view of the exceptional occasion. But there is little room to doubt that Schiller was sincere in his high regard for the ideal Christianity. "Even our religion, distorted as it is by the faithless hands that have transmitted it to us, who can fail to recognize in it the ennobling influence of the better philosophy?" "In order that we might meet here as Christians, it was necessary that this religion be prepared by innumerable revolutions." "The Christian religion has such a manifold relation to the present condition of the world that its appearance is the most important fact in the history of the world. But neither in the time when it appeared nor in the

people among whom it originated is there to be found, from lack of sources, a satisfactory explanation of its appearance."

Sentiments of devout Christianity and Catholicism in the mouth of Johanna or of Maria Stuart are of course no evidence that Schiller held the same point of view, and need not be cited. Yet, the scantiness of doctrinal utterances from even such characters has a certain negative value in interpreting the poet.

But when we turn to expressions of disapproval of the organized Church, expressions which might easily be mistaken for Christianity *per se*, we find an abundance of material, the distrust of the hierarchy not being limited to any particular confession. A letter to Hans von Wolzogen, 1783, refers to the misfortunes of an ex-Catholic priest, "a living example of how much mischief the priests can do." In a letter to Körner, 1787, regarding Herder's sermon, which he had just heard: "But I must confess to you frankly that no preaching appeals to me. Sermons are for the common man. The intellectual man who defends them is either narrow, a visionary or a hypocrite." A number of letters contain gentle raillery upon his own or his friends' lack of Christianity. "For a long time the steady decline of true Christianity in the Lengefeld family has lain upon my Christian heart like a hundred pound weight." His work on *Der Geisterscher* "has almost unsettled my Christianity, which as you know not all the powers of hell have been able to shake." "You (Charlotte and Karoline) are beginning with the belief in sympathy and will end by becoming Christians. I shudder at the prospect." To Niethammer: "Heaven grant that no Württemberg pulpit take you from us prematurely. That would not be calculated to reconcile me to Christianity (*dem lieben Christentum*), which, *inter nos*, has so little more to lose with me" (1791). To Körner, 1793: "But I doubt very much whether Kant has done well to support the Christian religion with philosophical arguments. All that can be expected from the well known character of the defenders of (the Christian) religion is that they will accept the support but reject the philosophical reasoning, and Kant will have accomplished nothing but to have patched up the crumbling structure of folly."

In the essay *Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet*, occurs this passage at the same time praising pure Christianity and condemning the abuse of it by the hierarchy: "The religion of Christ was the warranty when America was depopulated. Damien and Ravailac murdered to glorify the religion of Christ, and Charles IX in Paris fired upon the fleeing Huguenots. But who would dream of charging up to the gentlest of all religions an out-

rage which the rudest animalism would solemnly abjure!" From the *Abfall der Niederlande* a number of passages attest the same attitude. "Charles V, who in this great religious division had taken the side which a despot could not fail to take." "The clergy had always been a support of the royal power, and could not be otherwise. Their golden age always coincided with the servitude of the human mind, and like royalty we see them derive their harvest from stupidity and sensuality."

Unwarranted concern was aroused by *Die Götter Griechenlands*. It is a comparison of ideal Greek religion with a distorted conception of Christianity—the Christianity of asceticism (see the letter to Körner on this subject).

Of the dramas *Die Räuber* alone contains similar attacks on the organized Church, although it is professedly written in defence of true religion.

IMMORTALITY.

On the various details of the popular creeds Schiller scarcely touches at all. Indeed one might well derive from his silence a fair notion of the non-essentials in religion. Only on the subject of immortality do we find abundant utterance. In the main this utterance implies or distinctly expresses a belief in, or a hope for, personal immortality. In some cases there is a distinct doubt of this, or the expression of a different ideal of immortal life.

In his earlier letters, as that to Captain von Hoven on the death of the latter's son, the attempt to comfort makes a belief in immortality almost perfunctory. On the other hand, in letters to W. von Wolzogen regarding his mother's death and in others regarding his own and his mother's ill health there is a notable absence of allusion to a future life. On the death of his father the only expression on this head is rather non-committal: "It is well with him." To W. von Humboldt on the death of the latter's son he writes: "I know of no consolation but that which time will bring."

While the poem *Resignation* contains the most magnificent denial of immortality to be found anywhere in literature, other writings of about the same time strike the opposite chord. For instance:

"Life's counterfeit, by Hope, the fair deceiver,
Embalmed with Death to lie!
Time's bloodless mummy, niched in tombs forever,
Which the crazed fancy of delirious fever
Calls Immortality!

"Death has been silent for six thousand years;
Nor from the grave one corpse to living ears
Of the Requirer told."

On the other hand, certain lines from the *Theosophie des Julius*, the hymn *An die Freude*, and *Die Klage der Ceres* are worthy of consideration.

Several earlier poems, *Eine Leichenphantasie* and *Elegie auf den Tod eines Jünglings*, are very pronounced in their definite belief in resurrection, but are perhaps not so valid as later utterances. Of later poems among the finest (for there are many) is the familiar passage from *Das Lied von der Glocke*. And still more positive is the tone of the whole poem, *Die Hoffnung*.

Here and there occurs an expression with a less certain note, as in the inaugural address: "To every person with talents there is open a path to immortality—I mean to the true immortality, in which the deed lives and hastens onward even though the name of the performer be left behind." And with this goes the famous distich on *Immortality*:

"Fearest thou death, and wishest forever to live?
Live in the Whole, it will last when thou long art dust."

The dramas are full of beautiful passages bearing a belief in personal immortality.

PRAYER.

It is clear from a letter to Körner, 1788, that Schiller did not indulge in formal prayer: "If I could pray I would include you in my prayers." And this notwithstanding such expressions as the following: "Tell my mother that I sympathize deeply with her in her sufferings and am sending my best wishes to Heaven for her." But if we raise the question of the true meaning and value of prayer, who shall set himself up to judge against such devout thoughts as this?

THE BIBLE.

While in *Die Räuber* Schiller professes indignation against those who assail the noble simplicity of the Scriptures, in a letter to Goethe, 1787, he says: "I must confess that I approach these records with such a lack of faith on all historical points that your doubts regarding a single point seem to me to be very reasonable. To me the Bible only is true where it is naïve; in all the rest, which is written with actual consciousness, I suspect a purpose and a later

origin." While this is far from the standpoint of modern criticism, it leaves no doubt that Schiller did not accept the Bible as an exceptionally inspired or infallible book.

CREED.

If we look for condensed expressions of Schiller's faith, aside from those already incidentally quoted, we may well consider these: "I confess frankly, I believe in the actuality of unselfish love. I am lost if there is no such thing; I surrender God, immortality, and virtue. I have no longer any evidence for these hopes if I cease to believe in love."—From the *Theosophie des Julius*. And from a letter to Körner, 1787: "I have but one norm for morality, and that, I believe, the severest: Is the act which I am about to perform good or bad for the world if it should become universal." This is but a modification of Kant's familiar rule, and, after all, but an abstract formulation of the Golden Rule of Jesus.

Finally the famous and somewhat hackneyed *Die Worte des Glaubens*, in which the "three words," or essentials of Schiller's faith, are Liberty, Virtue, and God. The final stanza makes the appeal:

"Hold fast these three words of belief, and about
From lip unto lip, full of thought, let them flee;
They take not their birth from the being without,
But a voice from within will their oracle be;
And never in man will all true worth be o'er
Till in these three words he believes no more."

Julian Schmidt in *Schiller und seine Zeitgenossen*, expresses doubts of the sincerity of Schiller's sentiments in the *Theosophie des Julius*, finding there only beautiful pictures, more poetic imagination than overwhelming love of truth. Thus Schmidt repeats the reproach made to the youthful poet by his schoolmate Boigeol (page 327). But it seems to me that this criticism suffers from a painful misconception of the inherent nature of religion. A theosophy is a philosophy of the universe, and it is not yet religion. It may be a very important basis of religion, or again it may merely be abstracted from religion, but it is not itself religion. As Matthew Arnold defined religion to be "morality touched with emotion," so from another side of the same subject, one may define religion as theosophy touched with emotion. Emotion is at least an essential factor of religion.

In one way I regard Schiller's poems as a better evidence for

his religion than all his philosophical letters and disquisitions, and for this very reason: in the poems we find his philosophical speculations touched with emotion, and this very fact proves that they were sincere, this fact makes them religious.

While Schiller sometimes speaks with suspicion or even with hostility of "religion," it is quite easy to see in such cases that he has in mind the hierarchy or some certain outward religious organization. His famous epigram,

"What my religion? Of those that thou namest none;
The reason thou askest? 'Tis easy: Because I've religion,"

shows how keenly the poet distinguished between the spirit and the form of religion.

Religion was for Schiller: the longing and the striving for harmony with the spirit and tendency of the universe. This essence of all religion he embraced with a fervor and a deep reverence not exceeded by the most pronounced devotees of any sect.

From Schiller's letters and his various essays and histories alone we may then derive his views on the elements of religion and the various phases of religion as follows:

Schiller rejected practically the whole theological system of the Church as he understood it, and, very explicitly:

All impeachments of the law-fulness of the Universe, including Special Revelation, the inspiration and peculiar authority of the Bible, the exceptional divinity of Jesus, his miraculous origin and deeds, and especial providences.

He distrusted religious organizations of all kinds, fearing their tendency to fetter the human spirit, whereas he found the very life of the spirit to consist in the liberty to discover and assimilate the will of God. Hence he avoided and to some extent antagonized the hierarchy, the clergy, public worship, and all rites and ceremonies.

And from these sources, supported by the evidence of his poems and dramas, we find that his religious sentiment, far from being simply negative, was deep and reverent and sincere. The one simple couplet, *Mein Glaube*, shows why he stood apart from the religious organizations of his day. And while the poet's reverent spirit shunned the formulation of a credo, the foregoing extracts from his writings afford ample basis for declaring that he held the following beliefs in a more or less positive way:

He believed steadfastly, with no more hesitation and intermission than many a patriarch and saint, in one All-good, All-

wise, All-knowing, Loving Power, immanent in the Universe, and especially in man.

He believed in Virtue supremely and trusted the Inner Voice, its monitor, holding virtue to be the harmonious adaptation of the individual's will to the will of God as revealed in the laws and history of the universe and in the heart of man.

He believed with a strong faith in Immortality, wavering sometimes as to the persistence of the individual consciousness, and rejecting all attempts to locate and condition the future state.

He believed in the Brotherhood of man, and trusted man as the image of God on earth.

He recognized the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth and revered his ethics and his life.

He recognized the immense service to mankind of the Christian religion.

He was intensely reverent toward all that was good and beautiful, and worshiped sincerely in his own way, which was, indeed, not the way of the Church.

But for one who was so inherently religious in the very fibre and marrow of his being, the attempts to demonstrate his religion seem bare and dead. It is a case of the letter that killeth.

Schiller had a true feeling in his youth when he believed himself called to preach. And in fact he did not forsake the calling, but chose only a wider and freer pulpit than the Church at that time afforded him. Every one who approached Schiller closely in life or in his writings was impressed with this sense of his priestly and prophetic character, using the words in their best sense. So true is this, that one of the chief criticisms of Schiller's work, on the part of those who hold that the artist must love beauty for beauty's sake alone, has been this tendency to preach.

For my own part, the beauty of outward Nature, the beauty of truth, and the beauty of holiness seem to me but varying manifestations of the one Beauty. A complete religion will ignore none of them, though apparently it will dwell more and more on the beauty of virtue. The supreme poet will ever be near to the priest, and I cannot find their alliance a reproach to either.

From the standpoint of the enlightened thought of the twentieth century Schiller was without question a deeply religious man, and all of his writings no less than his life bear testimony to the fact.