les Veteris et Novi Testamenti 1650-1653[32] to Judgment Day. It is the history of the fall and redemption of man, the appearance of the Saviour constituting the center as well as the turning point. It demonstrates both the unity of mankind and the design of God.

To man history may look important, but the Christian must never forget that it is but a twinkle in God's eternal eye. He has been forever before the creation of the universe and of man - events that are simply identified! - and he will be forever after their passing. Throughout history Satan and the Lord may be struggling for the souls of men - still the outcome of this great battle here on earth counts for little, at the end of time the Allmighty will emerge victorious. Where the end is assured, we may well speak of predestination. God predetermines man's final salvation and even reveals his decision to him. Consequently, the Christian view of history does not suggest a commedia dell'arte, but rather a drama the details of which are known in advance to both actors and audience. To quote Windelband, we are faced with a "play of shadows and puppets"[33].

Hegel's interpretation of history differs only in minor respects from the Christian version. He too lets history run its course according to a preconceived pattern. For him the idea of the unity of the human race is as crucial as the belief in the mediation of history into the Absolute Mind. Like the Church Hegel believes history to form but a ripple in the all-encompassing life-stream of divine Logic. In Hegelian language, it serves as a stepping stone for the Absolute Mind on its way from nature through history to philosophy. To a certain extent, we can no doubt interpret the Christian conception of history as a story of progress. As Croce puts it, "Christian pessimism is irradiated with hope... all had competed in... the final end of history, linked one with the other, not as effects following from a blind cause, but as stages of a process"[34]. While to the Christian progress remains transcendent, Hegel stresses more the progressive realization of secular freedom: "The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom"[35]. "The Orientals ... only know that one is free"[36]. "... the Greeks ... and the Romans likewise know only that some are free - not man as

32) Ibid., p.134.

33) W. Windelband, Op. cit., p.285.

34) B. Croce, Op. cit., p.206. Cf. also E. Troeltsch, "Historiography", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.VI, New York 1925, p.717. "... History for the first time is here understood as progress... Christian pessimism is irradiated with hope... all had competed in... the final end of history, linked one with the other, not as effects following from a blind cause, but as stages of a process."

35) Hegel, Philosophy of History, p.64.

36) Ibid., p.62.