FEUERBACH LUDWIG

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

Ludwig Feuerbach

The Essence of Christianity

Feuerbach L.

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Содержание

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The Essence of Christianity Translated from the second German edition

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The first edition of this work was published in 1854, and, although a large one, has been long out of print. Many inquiries having been made for it since the recent lamented death of the translator, the publishers have determined to offer a second edition to the public, and have been advised to give it a place in their "English and Foreign Philosophical Library." It is an exact reprint of the first edition, and they trust it will be received with equal favour.

London, June 1881.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.[1]

The clamour excited by the present work has not surprised me, and hence it has not in the least moved me from my position. On the contrary, I have once more, in all calmness, subjected my work to the severest scrutiny, both historical and philosophical; I have, as far as possible, freed it from its defects of form, and enriched it with new developments, illustrations, and historical testimonies, – testimonies in the highest degree striking and irrefragable. Now that I have thus verified my analysis by historical proofs, it is to be hoped that readers whose eyes are not sealed will be convinced and will admit, even though reluctantly, that my work contains a faithful, correct translation of the Christian religion out of the Oriental language of imagery into plain speech. And it has no pretension to be anything more than a close translation, or, to speak literally, an empirical or historico-philosophical analysis, a solution of the enigma of the Christian religion. The general propositions which I premise in the Introduction are no *à priori*, excogitated propositions, no products of speculation; they have arisen out of the analysis of religion; they are only, as indeed are all the fundamental ideas of the work, generalisations from the known manifestations of human nature, and in particular of the religious consciousness, – facts converted into thoughts, *i. e.*, expressed in general terms, and thus made the property of the understanding. The ideas of my work are only conclusions, *consequences*, drawn from premisses which are not themselves mere ideas, but objective facts either actual or historical – facts which had not their place in my head simply in virtue of their ponderous existence in folio. I unconditionally repudiate *absolute*, immaterial, self-sufficing speculation – that speculation which draws its material from within. I differ *toto cœlo* from those philosophers who pluck out their eyes that they may see better; for *my* thought I require the senses, especially sight; I found my ideas on materials which can be appropriated only through the activity of the senses. I do not generate the object from the thought, but the thought from the object; and I hold *that* alone to be an object which has an existence beyond one's own brain. I am an idealist only in the region of *practical* philosophy, that is, I do not regard the limits of the past and present as the limits of humanity, of the future; on the contrary, I firmly believe that many things – yes, many things – which with the short-sighted, pusillanimous practical men of to-day, pass for flights of imagination, for ideas never to be realised, for mere chimeras, will to-morrow, *i. e.*, in the next century, – centuries in individual life are days in the life of humanity, – exist in full reality. Briefly, the "Idea" is to me only faith in the historical future, in the triumph of truth and virtue; it has for me only a political and moral significance; for in the sphere of strictly theoretical philosophy, I attach myself, in direct opposition to the Hegelian philosophy, only to *realism*, to materialism in the sense above indicated. The maxim hitherto adopted by speculative philosophy: All that is mine I carry with me, the old *omnia mea mecum porto*, I cannot, alas! appropriate. I have many things outside myself, which I cannot convey either in my pocket or my head, but which nevertheless I look upon as belonging to me, not indeed as a mere man – a view not now in question – but as a philosopher. I am nothing but a *natural philosopher in the domain of mind*; and the natural philosopher can do nothing without instruments, without material means. In this character I have written the present work, which consequently contains nothing else than the principle of a new philosophy verified practically, *i. e.*, *in concreto*, in application to a special object, but an object which has a universal significance: namely, to religion, in which this principle is exhibited, developed, and thoroughly carried out. This philosophy is essentially distinguished from the systems hitherto prevalent, in that it corresponds to the real, complete nature of man; but for that very reason it is antagonistic to minds perverted and crippled by a superhuman, *i. e.*, anti-human, anti-natural religion and speculation. It does not, as I have already said elsewhere, regard the *pen* as the only fit

[1] The opening paragraphs of this Preface are omitted, as having too specific a reference to transient German polemics to interest the English reader.

organ for the revelation of truth, but the eye and ear, the hand and foot; it does not identify the *idea* of the fact with the fact itself, so as to reduce real existence to an existence on paper, but it separates the two, and precisely by this separation attains to the *fact itself*; it recognises as the true thing, not the thing as it is an object of the abstract reason, but as it is an object of the real, complete man, and hence as it is itself a real, complete thing. This philosophy does not rest on an Understanding *per se*, on an absolute, nameless understanding, belonging one knows not to whom, but on the understanding of man; – though not, I grant, on that of man enervated by speculation and dogma; – and it speaks the language of men, not an empty, unknown tongue. Yes, both in substance and in speech, it places philosophy in *the negation of philosophy*, *i. e.*, it declares *that* alone to be the true philosophy which is converted *in succum et sanguinem*, which is incarnate in Man; and hence it finds its highest triumph in the fact that to all dull and pedantic minds, which place the *essence* of philosophy in the *show* of philosophy, it appears to be no philosophy at all.

This philosophy has for its principle, not the Substance of Spinoza, not the *ego* of Kant and Fichte, not the Absolute Identity of Schelling, not the Absolute Mind of Hegel, in short, no abstract, merely conceptional being, but a *real* being, the true *Ens realissimum*– man; its principle, therefore, is in the highest degree positive and real. It generates thought from the *opposite* of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses; it has relation to its object first through the senses, *i. e.*, passively, before defining it in thought. Hence my work, as a specimen of this philosophy, so far from being a production to be placed in the category of Speculation, – although in another point of view it is the true, the incarnate result of prior philosophical systems, – is the direct opposite of speculation, nay, puts an end to it by explaining it. Speculation makes religion say only what it has *itself* thought, and expressed far better than religion; it assigns a meaning to religion without any reference to the *actual* meaning of religion; it does not look beyond itself. I, on the contrary, let religion itself speak; I constitute myself only its listener and interpreter, not its prompter. Not to invent, but to discover, "to unveil existence," has been my sole object; to *see* correctly, my sole endeavour. It is not I, but religion that worships man, although religion, or rather theology, denies this; it is not I, an insignificant individual, but religion itself that says: God is man, man is God; it is not I, but religion that denies the God who is *not* man, but only an *ens rationis*, – since it makes God become man, and then constitutes this God, not distinguished from man, having a human form, human feelings, and human thoughts, the object of its worship and veneration. I have only found the key to the cipher of the Christian religion, only extricated its true meaning from the web of contradictions and delusions called theology; – but in doing so I have certainly committed a sacrilege. If therefore my work is negative, irreligious, atheistic, let it be remembered that atheism – at least in the sense of this work – is the secret of religion itself; that religion itself, not indeed on the surface, but fundamentally, not in intention or according to its own supposition, but in its heart, in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature. Or let it be *proved* that the historical as well as the rational arguments of my work are false; let them be refuted – not, however, I entreat, by judicial denunciations, or theological jeremiads, by the trite phrases of speculation, or other pitiful expedients for which I have no name, but by *reasons*, and such reasons as I have not already thoroughly answered.

Certainly, my work is negative, destructive; but, be it observed, only in relation to the *un*human, not to the human elements of religion. It is therefore divided into two parts, of which the first is, as to its main idea, *positive*, the second, including the Appendix, not wholly, but in the main, *negative*; in both, however, the same positions are proved, only in a different or rather opposite manner. The first exhibits religion in its *essence*, its *truth*, the second exhibits it in its *contradictions*; the first is development, the second polemic; thus the one is, according to the nature of the case, calmer, the other more vehement. Development advances gently, contest impetuously; for development is self-contented at every stage, contest only at the last blow. Development is deliberate, but contest resolute. Development is *light*, contest *fire*. Hence results a difference between the two parts even as to their form. Thus in the first part I show that the true sense of Theology is Anthropology, that there is no

distinction between the *predicates* of the divine and human nature, and, consequently, no distinction between the divine and human *subject*: I say *consequently*, for wherever, as is especially the case in theology, the predicates are not accidents, but express the essence of the subject, there is no distinction between subject and predicate, the one can be put in the place of the other; on which point I refer the reader to the Analytics of Aristotle, or even merely to the Introduction of Porphyry. In the second part, on the other hand, I show that the distinction which is made, or rather supposed to be made, between the theological and anthropological predicates resolves itself into an absurdity. Here is a striking example. In the first part I prove that the Son of God is *in religion* a real son, the son of God in the same sense in which man is the son of man, and I find therein the *truth*, the *essence* of religion, that it conceives and affirms a profoundly human relation as a divine relation; on the other hand, in the second part I show that the Son of God – not indeed in religion, but in theology, which is the reflection of religion upon itself, – is not a son in the natural, human sense, but in an entirely different manner, contradictory to Nature and reason, and therefore absurd, and I find in this negation of human sense and the human understanding, the negation of religion. Accordingly the first part is the *direct*, the second the *indirect* proof, that theology is anthropology: hence the second part necessarily has reference to the first; it has no independent significance; its only aim is to show that the sense in which religion is interpreted in the previous part of the work *must* be the true one, because the contrary is absurd. In brief, in the first part I am chiefly concerned with *religion*, in the second with *theology*: I say *chiefly*, for it was impossible to exclude theology from the first part, or religion from the second. A mere glance will show that my investigation includes *speculative* theology or philosophy, and not, as has been here and there erroneously supposed, *common* theology only, a kind of trash from which I rather keep as clear as possible, (though, for the rest, I am sufficiently well acquainted with it), confining myself always to the most essential, strict and necessary definition of the object,[2] and hence to that definition which gives to an object the most general interest, and raises it above the sphere of theology. But it is with theology that I have to do, not with theologians; for I can only undertake to characterise what is *primary*, – the *original*, not the copy, *principles*, not persons, *species*, not individuals, *objects of history*, not objects of the *chronique scandaleuse*.

If my work contained only the second part, it would be perfectly just to accuse it of a negative tendency, to represent the proposition: Religion is nothing, is an absurdity, as its essential purport. But I by no means say (that were an easy task!): God is nothing, the Trinity is nothing, the Word of God is nothing, &c. I only show that they are not *that* which the illusions of theology make them, – not foreign, but native mysteries, the mysteries of human nature; I show that religion takes the apparent, the superficial in Nature and humanity for the essential, and hence conceives their true essence as a separate, special existence: that consequently, religion, in the definitions which it gives of God, *e. g.*, of the Word of God, – at least in those definitions which are not negative in the sense above alluded to, – only defines or makes objective the true nature of the human word. The reproach that according to my book religion is an absurdity, a nullity, a pure illusion, would be well founded only if, according to it, that into which I resolve religion, which I prove to be its true object and substance, namely, *man*, —*anthropology*, were an absurdity, a nullity, a pure illusion. But so far from giving a trivial or even a subordinate significance to anthropology, – a significance which is assigned to it only just so long as a theology stands above it and in opposition to it, – I, on the contrary, while reducing theology to anthropology, exalt anthropology into theology, very much as Christianity, while lowering God into man, made man into God; though, it is true, this human God was by a further process made a transcendental, imaginary God, remote from man. Hence it is obvious that I do not take the word anthropology in the sense of the Hegelian or of any other philosophy, but in an infinitely higher and more general sense.

[2] For example, in considering the sacraments, I limit myself to two; for in the strictest sense (see Luther, T. xvii. p. 558), there are no more.

Religion is the dream of the human mind. But even in dreams we do not find ourselves in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality; we only see real things in the entrancing splendour of imagination and caprice, instead of in the simple daylight of reality and necessity. Hence I do nothing more to religion – and to speculative philosophy and theology also – than to open its eyes, or rather to turn its gaze from the internal towards the external, *i. e.*, I change the object as it is in the imagination into the object as it is in reality.

But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence, this change, inasmuch as it does away with illusion, is an absolute annihilation, or at least a reckless profanation; for in these days *illusion* only is *sacred, truth profane*. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness. Religion has disappeared, and for it has been substituted, even among Protestants, the *appearance* of religion – the Church – in order at least that "the faith" may be imparted to the ignorant and indiscriminating multitude; *that* faith being still the Christian, because the Christian churches stand now as they did a thousand years ago, and now, as formerly, the *external signs* of the faith are in vogue. That which has no longer any existence in faith (the faith of the modern world is only an ostensible faith, a faith which does not believe what it fancies that it believes, and is only an undecided, pusillanimous unbelief) is still to pass current as *opinion*: that which is no longer sacred in itself and in truth is still at least to *seem* sacred. Hence the simulated religious indignation of the present age, the age of shows and illusion, concerning my analysis, especially of the Sacraments. But let it not be demanded of an author who proposes to himself as his goal not the favour of his contemporaries, but only the truth, the unveiled, naked truth, that he should have or feign respect towards an empty appearance, especially as the object which underlies this appearance is in itself the culminating point of religion, *i. e.*, the point at which the religious slides into the irreligious. Thus much in justification, not in excuse, of my analysis of the Sacraments.

With regard to the true bearing of my analysis of the Sacraments, especially as presented in the concluding chapter, I only remark, that I therein illustrate by a palpable and visible example the essential purport, the peculiar theme of my work; that I therein call upon the senses themselves to witness to the truth of my analysis and my ideas, and demonstrate *ad oculos, ad tactum, ad gustum*, what I have taught *ad captum* throughout the previous pages. As, namely, the water of Baptism, the wine and bread of the Lord's Supper, taken in their natural power and significance, are and effect infinitely more than in a supernaturalistic, illusory significance; so the object of religion in general, conceived in the sense of this work, *i. e.*, the anthropological sense, is infinitely more productive and real, both in theory and practice, than when accepted in the sense of theology. For as that which is or is supposed to be imparted in the water, bread, and wine, over and above these natural substances themselves, is something in the imagination only, but in truth, in reality, nothing; so also the object of religion in general, the Divine essence, in distinction from the essence of Nature and Humanity, – that is to say, if its attributes, as understanding, love, &c., are and signify something else than these attributes as they belong to man and Nature, – is only something in the imagination, but in truth and reality nothing. Therefore – this is the moral of the fable – we should not, as is the case in theology and speculative philosophy, make real beings and things into arbitrary signs, vehicles, symbols, or predicates of a distinct, transcendent, absolute, *i. e.*, abstract being; but we should accept and understand them in the significance which they have in themselves, which is identical with their qualities, with those conditions which make them what they are: – thus only do we obtain the key to a *real theory and practice*. I, in fact, put in the place of the barren baptismal water, the beneficent effect of real water. How "watery," how trivial! Yes, indeed, very trivial. But so Marriage, in its time, was a *very trivial truth*, which Luther, on the ground of his natural good sense, maintained in opposition to the seemingly holy illusion of celibacy. But while I thus view water as a real thing, I at the same time intend it as a vehicle, an image, an example, a symbol, of the "unholy" spirit of my work, just

as the water of Baptism – the object of my analysis – is at once literal and symbolical water. It is the same with bread and wine. Malignity has hence drawn the conclusion that bathing, eating, and drinking are the *summa summarum*, the positive result of my work. I make no other reply than this: If the whole of religion is contained in the Sacraments, and there are consequently no other religious acts than those which are performed in Baptism and the Lord's Supper; *then* I grant that the entire purport and positive result of my work are bathing, eating, and drinking, since this work is nothing but a faithful, rigid, historico-philosophical analysis of religion – the revelation of religion to itself, the *awakening of religion to self-consciousness*.

I say an *historico-philosophical* analysis, in distinction from a merely *historical* analysis of Christianity. The historical critic – such a one, for example, as Daumer or Ghillany – shows that the Lord's Supper is a rite lineally descended from the ancient cultus of human sacrifice; that once, instead of bread and wine, real human flesh and blood were partaken. I, on the contrary, take as the object of my analysis and reduction only the Christian significance of the rite, that view of it which is *sanctioned* Christianity, and I proceed on the supposition that only *that significance* which a dogma or institution has in Christianity (of course in ancient Christianity, not in modern), whether it may present itself in other religions or not, is also the *true origin* of that dogma or institution *in so far* as it is *Christian*. Again, the historical critic, as, for example, Lützelberger, shows that the narratives of the miracles of Christ resolve themselves into contradictions and absurdities, that they are later fabrications, and that consequently Christ was no miracle-worker, nor, in general, that which he is represented to be in the Bible. I, on the other hand, do not inquire what the real, natural Christ was or may have been in distinction from what he has been made or has become in Supernaturalism; on the contrary, I accept the Christ of religion, but I show that this superhuman being is nothing else than a product and reflex of the supernatural human mind. I do not ask whether this or that, or any miracle *can* happen or not; I only show *what* miracle *is*, and I show it not *à priori*, but by examples of miracles narrated in the Bible as real events; in doing so, however, I answer or rather preclude the question as to the possibility or reality of necessity of miracle. Thus much concerning the distinction between me and the historical critics who have attacked Christianity. As regards my relation to Strauss and Bruno Bauer, in company with whom I am constantly named, I merely point out here that the distinction between our works is sufficiently indicated by the distinction between their objects, which is implied even in the title-page. Bauer takes for the object of his criticism the evangelical history, *i. e.*, biblical Christianity, or rather biblical theology; Strauss, the System of Christian Doctrine and the Life of Jesus (which may also be included under the title of Christian Doctrine), *i. e.*, dogmatic Christianity, or rather dogmatic theology; I, Christianity in general, *i. e.*, the Christian *religion*, and consequently only Christian philosophy or theology. Hence I take my citations chiefly from men in whom Christianity was not merely a theory or a dogma, not merely theology, but religion. My principal theme is Christianity, is Religion, as it is the *immediate object*, the *immediate nature*, of man. Erudition and philosophy are to me only the *means* by which I bring to light the treasure hid in man.

I must further mention that the circulation which my work has had amongst the public at large was neither desired nor expected by me. It is true that I have always taken as the standard of the mode of teaching and writing, not the abstract, particular, professional philosopher, but universal man, that I have regarded *man* as the criterion of truth, and not this or that founder of a system, and have from the first placed the highest excellence of the philosopher in this, that he abstains, both as a man and as an author, from the ostentation of philosophy, *i. e.*, that he is a philosopher only in reality, not formally, that he is a quiet philosopher, not a loud and still less a brawling one. Hence, in all my works, as well as in the present one, I have made the utmost clearness, simplicity, and definiteness a law to myself, so that they may be understood, at least in the main, by every cultivated and thinking man. But notwithstanding this, my work can be appreciated and fully understood only by the scholar, that is to say, by the scholar who loves truth, who is capable of forming a judgment, who is above the notions and prejudices of the learned and unlearned vulgar; for although a thoroughly independent

production, it has yet its necessary logical basis in history. I very frequently refer to this or that historical phenomenon without expressly designating it, thinking this superfluous; and such references can be understood by the scholar alone. Thus, for example, in the very first chapter, where I develop the necessary consequences of the standpoint of Feeling, I allude to Jacobi and Schleiermacher; in the second chapter I allude chiefly to Kantism, Scepticism, Theism, Materialism and Pantheism; in the chapter on the "Standpoint of Religion," where I discuss the contradictions between the religious or theological and the physical or natural-philosophical view of Nature, I refer to philosophy in the age of orthodoxy, and especially to the philosophy of Descartes and Leibnitz, in which this contradiction presents itself in a peculiarly characteristic manner. The reader, therefore, who is unacquainted with the historical facts and ideas presupposed in my work, will fail to perceive on what my arguments and ideas hinge; no wonder if my positions often appear to him baseless, however firm the footing on which they stand. It is true that the subject of my work is of universal human interest; moreover, its fundamental ideas, though not in the form in which they are here expressed, or in which they could be expressed under existing circumstances, will one day become the common property of mankind: for nothing is opposed to them in the present day but empty, powerless illusions and prejudices in contradiction with the true nature of man. But in considering this subject in the first instance, I was under the necessity of treating it as a matter of science, of philosophy; and in rectifying the aberrations of Religion, Theology, and Speculation, I was naturally obliged to use their expressions, and even to appear to speculate, or – which is the same thing – to turn theologian myself, while I nevertheless only analyse speculation, *i. e.*, reduce theology to anthropology. My work, as I said before, contains, and applies in the concrete, the principle of a new philosophy suited – not to the schools, but – to man. Yes, it contains that principle, but only by *evolving* it out of the very core of religion; hence, be it said in passing, the new philosophy can no longer, like the old Catholic and modern Protestant scholasticism, fall into the temptation to prove its agreement with religion by its agreement with Christian dogmas; on the contrary, being evolved from the nature of religion, it has in itself the true essence of religion, – is, in its very quality as a philosophy, a religion also. But a work which considers ideas in their genesis and explains and demonstrates them in strict sequence, is, by the very form which this purpose imposes upon it, unsuited to popular reading.

Lastly, as a supplement to this work with regard to many apparently unvindicated positions, I refer to my articles in the *Deutsches Jahrbuch*, January and February 1842, to my critiques and *Charakteristiken des modernen After-christenthums*, in previous numbers of the same periodical, and to my earlier works, especially the following: —*P. Bayle. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Menschheit*, Ausbach, 1838, and *Philosophie und Christenthum*, Mannheim, 1839. In these works I have sketched, with a few sharp touches, the historical solution of Christianity, and have shown that Christianity has in fact long vanished, not only from the reason but from the life of mankind, that it is nothing more than a *fixed idea*, in flagrant contradiction with our fire and life assurance companies, our railroads and steam-carriages, our picture and sculpture galleries, our military and industrial schools, our theatres and scientific museums.

LUDWIG FEUERBACH.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. The Essential Nature of Man

Religion has its basis in the essential difference between man and the brute – the brutes have no religion. It is true that the old uncritical writers on natural history attributed to the elephant, among other laudable qualities, the virtue of religiousness; but the religion of elephants belongs to the realm of fable. Cuvier, one of the greatest authorities on the animal kingdom, assigns, on the strength of his personal observations, no higher grade of intelligence to the elephant than to the dog.

But what is this essential difference between man and the brute? The most simple, general, and also the most popular answer to this question is – consciousness: – but consciousness in the strict sense; for the consciousness implied in the feeling of self as an individual, in discrimination by the senses, in the perception and even judgment of outward things according to definite sensible signs, cannot be denied to the brutes. Consciousness in the strictest sense is present only in a being to whom his species, his essential nature, is an object of thought. The brute is indeed conscious of himself as an individual – and he has accordingly the feeling of self as the common centre of successive sensations – but not as a species: hence, he is without that consciousness which in its nature, as in its name, is akin to science. Where there is this higher consciousness there is a capability of science. Science is the cognisance of species. In practical life we have to do with individuals; in science, with species. But only a being to whom his own species, his own nature, is an object of thought, can make the essential nature of other things or beings an object of thought.

Hence the brute has only a simple, man a twofold life: in the brute, the inner life is one with the outer; man has both an inner and an outer life. The inner life of man is the life which has relation to his species, to his general, as distinguished from his individual, nature. Man thinks – that is, he converses with himself. The brute can exercise no function which has relation to its species without another individual external to itself; but man can perform the functions of thought and speech, which strictly imply such a relation, apart from another individual. Man is himself at once I and thou; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought.

Religion being identical with the distinctive characteristic of man, is then identical with self-consciousness – with the consciousness which man has of his nature. But religion, expressed generally, is consciousness of the infinite; thus it is and can be nothing else than the consciousness which man has of his own – not finite and limited, but infinite nature. A really finite being has not even the faintest adumbration, still less consciousness, of an infinite being, for the limit of the nature is also the limit of the consciousness. The consciousness of the caterpillar, whose life is confined to a particular species of plant, does not extend itself beyond this narrow domain. It does, indeed, discriminate between this plant and other plants, but more it knows not. A consciousness so limited, but on account of that very limitation so infallible, we do not call consciousness, but instinct. Consciousness, in the strict or proper sense, is identical with consciousness of the infinite; a limited consciousness is no consciousness; consciousness is essentially infinite in its nature.[3] The consciousness of the infinite is nothing else than the consciousness of the infinity of the consciousness; or, in the consciousness of the infinite, the conscious subject has for his object the infinity of his own nature.

What, then, *is* the nature of man, of which he is conscious, or what constitutes the specific distinction, the proper humanity of man?[4] Reason, Will, Affection. To a complete man belong the

[3] "Objectum intellectus esse illimitatum sive omne verum ac, ut loquuntur, omne ens ut ens, ex eo constat, quod ad nullum non genus rerum extenditur, nullumque est, cujus cognoscendi capax non sit, licet ob varia obstacula multa sint, quæ re ipsa non norit." – Gassendi (Opp. Omn. Phys.).

[4] The obtuse Materialist says: "Man is distinguished from the brute *only* by consciousness – he is an animal with consciousness superadded;" not reflecting, that in a being which awakes to consciousness, there takes place a qualitative change, a differentiation of the entire nature. For the rest, our words are by no means intended to depreciate the nature of the lower animals. This is not the

power of thought, the power of will, the power of affection. The power of thought is the light of the intellect, the power of will is energy of character, the power of affection is love. Reason, love, force of will, are perfections – the perfections of the human being – nay, more, they are absolute perfections of being. To will, to love, to think, are the highest powers, are the absolute nature of man as man, and the basis of his existence. Man exists to think, to love, to will. Now that which is the end, the ultimate aim, is also the true basis and principle of a being. But what is the end of reason? Reason. Of love? Love. Of will? Freedom of the will. We think for the sake of thinking; love for the sake of loving; will for the sake of willing —*i. e.*, that we may be free. True existence is thinking, loving, willing existence. That alone is true, perfect, divine, which exists for its own sake. But such is love, such is reason, such is will. The divine trinity in man, above the individual man, is the unity of reason, love, will. Reason, Will, Love, are not powers which man possesses, for he is nothing without them, he is what he is only by them; they are the constituent elements of his nature, which he neither has nor makes, the animating, determining, governing powers – divine, absolute powers – to which he can oppose no resistance.[5]

How can the feeling man resist feeling, the loving one love, the rational one reason? Who has not experienced the overwhelming power of melody? And what else is the power of melody but the power of feeling? Music is the language of feeling; melody is audible feeling – feeling communicating itself. Who has not experienced the power of love, or at least heard of it? Which is the stronger – love or the individual man? Is it man that possesses love, or is it not much rather love that possesses man? When love impels a man to suffer death even joyfully for the beloved one, is this death-conquering power his own individual power, or is it not rather the power of love? And who that ever truly thought has not experienced that quiet, subtle power – the power of thought? When thou sinkest into deep reflection, forgetting thyself and what is around thee, dost thou govern reason, or is it not reason which governs and absorbs thee? Scientific enthusiasm – is it not the most glorious triumph of intellect over thee? The desire of knowledge – is it not a simply irresistible, and all-conquering power? And when thou suppressest a passion, renouncest a habit, in short, achievest a victory over thyself, is this victorious power thy own personal power, or is it not rather the energy of will, the force of morality, which seizes the mastery of thee, and fills thee with indignation against thyself and thy individual weaknesses?

Man is nothing without an object. The great models of humanity, such men as reveal to us what man is capable of, have attested the truth of this proposition by their lives. They had only one dominant passion – the realisation of the aim which was the essential object of their activity. But the object to which a subject essentially, necessarily relates, is nothing else than this subject's own, but objective, nature. If it be an object common to several individuals of the same species, but under various conditions, it is still, at least as to the form under which it presents itself to each of them according to their respective modifications, their own, but objective, nature.

Thus the Sun is the common object of the planets, but it is an object to Mercury, to Venus, to Saturn, to Uranus, under other conditions than to the Earth. Each planet has its own sun. The Sun which lights and warms Uranus has no physical (only an astronomical, scientific) existence for the Earth; and not only does the Sun appear different, but it really is *another* sun on Uranus than on the Earth. The relation of the Sun to the Earth is therefore at the same time a relation of the Earth to itself, or to its own nature, for the measure of the size and of the intensity of light which the Sun possesses as the object of the Earth is the measure of the distance which determines the peculiar nature of the Earth. Hence each planet has in its sun the mirror of its own nature.

In the object which he contemplates, therefore, man becomes acquainted with himself; consciousness of the objective is the self-consciousness of man. We know the man by the object, by his conception of what is external to himself; in it his nature becomes evident; this object is his

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place to enter further into that question.

[5] "Toute opinion est assez forte pour se faire exposer au prix de la vie." – Montaigne.

manifested nature, his true objective *ego*. And this is true not merely of spiritual, but also of sensuous objects. Even the objects which are the most remote from man, *because* they are objects to him, and to the extent to which they are so, are revelations of human nature. Even the moon, the sun, the stars, call to man Γνῶθι σεαυτόν. That he sees them, and so sees them, is an evidence of his own nature. The animal is sensible only of the beam which immediately affects life; while man perceives the ray, to him physically indifferent, of the remotest star. Man alone has purely intellectual, disinterested joys and passions; the eye of man alone keeps theoretic festivals. The eye which looks into the starry heavens, which gazes at that light, alike useless and harmless, having nothing in common with the earth and its necessities – this eye sees in that light its own nature, its own origin. The eye is heavenly in its nature. Hence man elevates himself above the earth only with the eye; hence theory begins with the contemplation of the heavens. The first philosophers were astronomers. It is the heavens that admonish man of his destination, and remind him that he is destined not merely to action, but also to contemplation.

The *absolute* to man is his own nature. The power of the object over him is therefore the power of his own nature. Thus the power of the object of feeling is the power of feeling itself; the power of the object of the intellect is the power of the intellect itself; the power of the object of the will is the power of the will itself. The man who is affected by musical sounds is governed by feeling; by the feeling, that is, which finds its corresponding element in musical sounds. But it is not melody as such, it is only melody pregnant with meaning and emotion, which has power over feeling. Feeling is only acted on by that which conveys feeling, *i. e.*, by itself, its own nature. Thus also the will; thus, and infinitely more, the intellect. Whatever kind of object, therefore, we are at any time conscious of, we are always at the same time conscious of our own nature; we can affirm nothing without affirming ourselves. And since to will, to feel, to think, are perfections, essences, realities, it is impossible that intellect, feeling, and will should feel or perceive themselves as limited, finite powers, *i. e.*, as worthless, as nothing. For finiteness and nothingness are identical; finiteness is only a euphemism for nothingness. Finiteness is the metaphysical, the theoretical – nothingness the pathological, practical expression. What is finite to the understanding is nothing to the heart. But it is impossible that we should be conscious of will, feeling, and intellect, as finite powers, because every perfect existence, every original power and essence, is the immediate verification and affirmation of itself. It is impossible to love, will, or think, without perceiving these activities to be perfections – impossible to feel that one is a loving, willing, thinking being, without experiencing an infinite joy therein. Consciousness consists in a being becoming objective to itself; hence it is nothing apart, nothing distinct from the being which is conscious of itself. How could it otherwise become conscious of itself? It is therefore impossible to be conscious of a perfection as an imperfection, impossible to feel feeling limited, to think thought limited.

Consciousness is self-verification, self-affirmation, self-love, joy in one's own perfection. Consciousness is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature; it exists only in a self-sufficing, complete being. Even human vanity attests this truth. A man looks in the glass; he has complacency in his appearance. This complacency is a necessary, involuntary consequence of the completeness, the beauty of his form. A beautiful form is satisfied in itself; it has necessarily joy in itself – in self-contemplation. This complacency becomes vanity only when a man piques himself on his form as being his individual form, not when he admires it as a specimen of human beauty in general. It is fitting that he should admire it thus: he can conceive no form more beautiful, more sublime than the human.[6] Assuredly every being loves itself, its existence – and fitly so. To exist is a good. *Quidquid essentia dignum est, scientia dignum est.* Everything that exists has value, is a being of distinction – at

[6] Homini homine nihil pulchrius. (Cic. de Nat. D. l. i.) And this is no sign of limitation, for he regards other beings as beautiful besides himself; he delights in the beautiful forms of animals, in the beautiful forms of plants, in the beauty of nature in general. But only the absolute, the perfect form, can delight without envy in the forms of other beings.

least this is true of the species: hence it asserts, maintains itself. But the highest form of self-assertion, the form which is itself a superiority, a perfection, a bliss, a good, is consciousness.

Every limitation of the reason, or in general of the nature of man, rests on a delusion, an error. It is true that the human being, as an individual, can and must – herein consists his distinction from the brute – feel and recognise himself to be limited; but he can become conscious of his limits, his finiteness, only because the perfection, the infinitude of his species, is perceived by him, whether as an object of feeling, of conscience, or of the thinking consciousness. If he makes his own limitations the limitations of the species, this arises from the mistake that he identifies himself immediately with the species – a mistake which is intimately connected with the individual's love of ease, sloth, vanity, and egoism. For a limitation which I know to be merely mine humiliates, shames, and perturbs me. Hence to free myself from this feeling of shame, from this state of dissatisfaction, I convert the limits of my individuality into the limits of human nature in general. What is incomprehensible to me is incomprehensible to others; why should I trouble myself further? It is no fault of mine; my understanding is not to blame, but the understanding of the race. But it is a ludicrous and even culpable error to define as finite and limited what constitutes the essence of man, the nature of the species, which is the absolute nature of the individual. Every being is sufficient to itself. No being can deny itself, *i. e.*, its own nature; no being is a limited one to itself. Rather, every being is in and by itself infinite – has its God, its highest conceivable being, in itself. Every limit of a being is cognisable only by another being out of and above him. The life of the ephemera is extraordinarily short in comparison with that of longer-lived creatures; but nevertheless, for the ephemera this short life is as long as a life of years to others. The leaf on which the caterpillar lives is for it a world, an infinite space.

That which makes a being what it is, is its talent, its power, its wealth, its adornment. How can it possibly hold its existence non-existence, its wealth poverty, its talent incapacity? If the plants had eyes, taste, and judgment, each plant would declare its own flower the most beautiful; for its comprehension, its taste, would reach no farther than its natural power of production. What the productive power of its nature has brought forth as the highest, that must also its taste, its judgment, recognise and affirm as the highest. What the nature affirms, the understanding, the taste, the judgment, cannot deny; otherwise the understanding, the judgment, would no longer be the understanding and judgment of this particular being, but of some other. The measure of the nature is also the measure of the understanding. If the nature is limited, so also is the feeling, so also is the understanding. But to a limited being its limited understanding is not felt to be a limitation; on the contrary, it is perfectly happy and contented with this understanding; it regards it, praises and values it, as a glorious, divine power; and the limited understanding, on its part, values the limited nature whose understanding it is. Each is exactly adapted to the other; how should they be at issue with each other? A being's understanding is its sphere of vision. As far as thou seest, so far extends thy nature; and conversely. The eye of the brute reaches no farther than its needs, and its nature no farther than its needs. And so far as thy nature reaches, so far reaches thy unlimited self-consciousness, so far art thou God. The discrepancy between the understanding and the nature, between the power of conception and the power of production in the human consciousness, on the one hand, is merely of individual significance and has not a universal application; and, on the other hand, it is only apparent. He who, having written a bad poem, knows it to be bad, is in his intelligence, and therefore in his nature, not so limited as he who, having written a bad poem, admires it and thinks it good.

It follows that if thou thinkest the infinite, thou perceivest and affirmest the infinitude of the power of thought; if thou feelest the infinite, thou feelest and affirmest the infinitude of the power of feeling. The object of the intellect is intellect objective to itself; the object of feeling is feeling objective to itself. If thou hast no sensibility, no feeling for music, thou perceivest in the finest music nothing more than in the wind that whistles by thy ear, or than in the brook which rushes past thy feet. What, then, is it which acts on thee when thou art affected by melody? What dost thou perceive in it?

What else than the voice of thy own heart? Feeling speaks only to feeling; feeling is comprehensible only by feeling, that is, by itself – for this reason, that the object of feeling is nothing else than feeling. Music is a monologue of emotion. But the dialogue of philosophy also is in truth only a monologue of the intellect; thought speaks only to thought. The splendours of the crystal charm the sense, but the intellect is interested only in the laws of crystallisation. The intellectual only is the object of the intellect.[7]

All therefore which, in the point of view of metaphysical, transcendental speculation and religion, has the significance only of the secondary, the subjective, the medium, the organ – has in truth the significance of the primary, of the essence, of the object itself. If, for example, feeling is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is nothing else than an expression of the nature of feeling. The true but latent sense of the phrase, "Feeling is the organ of the divine," is, feeling is the noblest, the most excellent, *i. e.*, the divine, in man. How couldst thou perceive the divine by feeling, if feeling were not itself divine in its nature? The divine assuredly is known only by means of the divine – God is known only by himself. The divine nature which is discerned by feeling is in truth nothing else than feeling enraptured, in ecstasy with itself – feeling intoxicated with joy, blissful in its own plenitude.

It is already clear from this that where feeling is held to be the organ of the infinite, the subjective essence of religion, – the external data of religion lose their objective value. And thus, since feeling has been held the cardinal principle in religion, the doctrines of Christianity, formerly so sacred, have lost their importance. If, from this point of view, some value is still conceded to Christian ideas, it is a value springing entirely from the relation they bear to feeling; if another object would excite the same emotions, it would be just as welcome. But the object of religious feeling is become a matter of indifference, only because when once feeling has been pronounced to be the subjective essence of religion, it in fact is also the objective essence of religion, though it may not be declared, at least directly, to be such. I say directly; for indirectly this is certainly admitted, when it is declared that feeling, as such, is religious, and thus the distinction between specifically religious and irreligious, or at least non-religious, feelings is abolished – a necessary consequence of the point of view in which feeling only is regarded as the organ of the divine. For on what other ground than that of its essence, its nature, dost thou hold feeling to be the organ of the infinite, the divine being? And is not the nature of feeling in general also the nature of every special feeling, be its object what it may? What, then, makes this feeling religious? A given object? Not at all; for this object is itself a religious one only when it is not an object of the cold understanding or memory, but of feeling. What then? The nature of feeling – a nature of which every special feeling, without distinction of objects, partakes. Thus, feeling is pronounced to be religious, simply because it is feeling; the ground of its religiousness is its own nature – lies in itself. But is not feeling thereby declared to be itself the absolute, the divine? If feeling in itself is good, religious, *i. e.*, holy, divine, has not feeling its God in itself?

But if, notwithstanding, thou wilt posit an object of feeling, but at the same time seekest to express thy feeling truly, without introducing by thy reflection any foreign element, what remains to thee but to distinguish between thy individual feeling and the general nature of feeling; – to separate the universal in feeling from the disturbing, adulterating influences with which feeling is bound up in thee, under thy individual conditions? Hence what thou canst alone contemplate, declare to be the infinite, and define as its essence, is merely the nature of feeling. Thou hast thus no other definition of God than this: God is pure, unlimited, free Feeling. Every other God, whom thou supposest, is a God thrust upon thy feeling from without. Feeling is atheistic in the sense of the orthodox belief, which attaches religion to an external object; it denies an objective God – it is itself God. In this point of view only the negation of feeling is the negation of God. Thou art simply too cowardly or too

[7] "The understanding is percipient only of understanding, and what proceeds thence." – Reimarus (Wahrh. der Natürl. Religion, iv. Abth. § 8).

narrow to confess in words what thy feeling tacitly affirms. Fettered by outward considerations, still in bondage to vulgar empiricism, incapable of comprehending the spiritual grandeur of feeling, thou art terrified before the religious atheism of thy heart. By this fear thou destroyest the unity of thy feeling with itself, in imagining to thyself an objective being distinct from thy feeling, and thus necessarily sinking back into the old questions and doubts – is there a God or not? – questions and doubts which vanish, nay, are impossible, where feeling is defined as the essence of religion. Feeling is thy own inward power, but at the same time a power distinct from thee, and independent of thee; it is in thee, above thee; it is itself that which constitutes the objective in thee – thy own being which impresses thee as another being; in short, thy God. How wilt thou, then, distinguish from this objective being within thee another objective being? How wilt thou get beyond thy feeling?

But feeling has here been adduced only as an example. It is the same with every other power, faculty, potentiality, reality, activity – the name is indifferent – which is defined as the essential organ of any object. Whatever is a subjective expression of a nature is simultaneously also its objective expression. Man cannot get beyond his true nature. He may indeed by means of the imagination conceive individuals of another so-called higher kind, but he can never get loose from his species, his nature; the conditions of being, the positive final predicates which he gives to these other individuals, are always determinations or qualities drawn from his own nature – qualities in which he in truth only images and projects himself. There may certainly be thinking beings besides men on the other planets of our solar system. But by the supposition of such beings we do not change our standing point – we extend our conceptions *quantitatively* not *qualitatively*. For as surely as on the other planets there are the same laws of motion, so surely are there the same laws of perception and thought as here. In fact, we people the other planets, not that we may place there different beings from ourselves, but *more* beings of our own or of a similar nature.[8]

[8] "Verisimile est, non minus quam geometriæ, etiam musicæ oblectationem ad plures quam ad nos pertinere. Positis enim aliis terris atque animalibus ratione et auditu pollentibus, cur tantum his nostris contigisset ea voluptas, quæ sola ex sono percipi potest?" – Christ. Hugenius (Cosmotheor., l. i.).

§ 2. The Essence of Religion Considered Generally

What we have hitherto been maintaining generally, even with regard to sensational impressions, of the relation between subject and object, applies especially to the relation between the subject and the religious object.

In the perceptions of the senses consciousness of the object is distinguishable from consciousness of self; but in religion, consciousness of the object and self-consciousness coincide. The object of the senses is out of man, the religious object is within him, and therefore as little forsakes him as his self-consciousness or his conscience; it is the intimate, the closest object. "God," says Augustine, for example, "is nearer, more related to us, and therefore more easily known by us, than sensible, corporeal things."[9] The object of the senses is in itself indifferent – independent of the disposition or of the judgment; but the object of religion is a selected object; the most excellent, the first, the supreme being; it essentially presupposes a critical judgment, a discrimination between the divine and the non-divine, between that which is worthy of adoration and that which is not worthy.[10] And here may be applied, without any limitation, the proposition: the object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively. Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness, knowledge of God is self-knowledge. By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical. Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; and conversely, God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man, – religion the solemn unveiling of a man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his intimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets.

But when religion – consciousness of God – is designated as the self-consciousness of man, this is not to be understood as affirming that the religious man is directly aware of this identity; for, on the contrary, ignorance of it is fundamental to the peculiar nature of religion. To preclude this misconception, it is better to say, religion is man's earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge. Hence, religion everywhere precedes philosophy, as in the history of the race, so also in that of the individual. Man first of all sees his nature as if *out of* himself, before he finds it in himself. His own nature is in the first instance contemplated by him as that of another being. Religion is the childlike condition of humanity; but the child sees his nature – man – out of himself; in childhood a man is an object to himself, under the form of another man. Hence the historical progress of religion consists in this: that what by an earlier religion was regarded as objective, is now recognised as subjective; that is, what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God is now perceived to be something *human*. What was at first religion becomes at a later period idolatry; man is seen to have adored his own nature. Man has given objectivity to himself, but has not recognised the object as his own nature: a later religion takes this forward step; every advance in religion is therefore a deeper self-knowledge. But every particular religion, while it pronounces its predecessors idolatrous, excepts itself – and necessarily so, otherwise it would no longer be religion – from the fate, the common nature of all religions: it imputes only to other religions what is the fault, if fault it be, of religion in general. Because it has a different object, a different tenor, because it has transcended the ideas of preceding religions, it erroneously supposes itself exalted above the necessary eternal laws which constitute the essence of religion – it fancies its object, its ideas, to be superhuman. But the essence of religion, thus hidden from the religious, is evident to the thinker, by whom religion is viewed objectively, which it cannot be by its votaries. And it is our task to show that the antithesis of divine and human is altogether

[9] De Genesi ad litteram, l. v. c. 16.

[10] "Unusquisque vestrum non cogitat, *prius* se debere Deum *nosse*, quam *colere*." – M. Minucii Felicis Octavianus, c. 24.

illusory, that it is nothing else than the antithesis between the human nature in general and the human individual; that, consequently, the object and contents of the Christian religion are altogether human.

Religion, at least the Christian, is the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature (*i. e.*, his subjective nature);[11] but a relation to it, viewed as a nature apart from his own. The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective —*i. e.*, contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature.[12]

In relation to the attributes, the predicates, of the Divine Being, this is admitted without hesitation, but by no means in relation to the subject of these predicates. The negation of the subject is held to be irreligion, nay, atheism; though not so the negation of the predicates. But that which has no predicates or qualities, has no effect upon me; that which has no effect upon me has no existence for me. To deny all the qualities of a being is equivalent to denying the being himself. A being without qualities is one which cannot become an object to the mind, and such a being is virtually non-existent. Where man deprives God of all qualities, God is no longer anything more to him than a negative being. To the truly religious man, God is not a being without qualities, because to him he is a positive, real being. The theory that God cannot be defined, and consequently cannot be known by man, is therefore the offspring of recent times, a product of modern unbelief.

As reason is and can be pronounced finite only where man regards sensual enjoyment, or religious emotion, or æsthetic contemplation, or moral sentiment, as the absolute, the true; so the proposition that God is unknowable or undefinable, can only be enunciated and become fixed as a dogma, where this object has no longer any interest for the intellect; where the real, the positive, alone has any hold on man, where the real alone has for him the significance of the essential, of the absolute, divine object, but where at the same time, in contradiction with this purely worldly tendency, there yet exist some old remains of religiousness. On the ground that God is unknowable, man excuses himself to what is yet remaining of his religious conscience for his forgetfulness of God, his absorption in the world: he denies God practically by his conduct, – the world has possession of all his thoughts and inclinations, – but he does not deny him theoretically, he does not attack his existence; he lets that rest. But this existence does not affect or incommode him; it is a merely negative existence, an existence without existence, a self-contradictory existence, – a state of being which, as to its effects, is not distinguishable from non-being. The denial of determinate, positive predicates concerning the divine nature is nothing else than a denial of religion, with, however, an appearance of religion in its favour, so that it is not recognised as a denial; it is simply a subtle, disguised atheism. The alleged religious horror of limiting God by positive predicates is only the irreligious wish to know nothing more of God, to banish God from the mind. Dread of limitation is dread of existence. All real existence, *i. e.*, all existence which is truly such, is qualitative, determinative existence. He who earnestly believes in the Divine existence is not shocked at the attributing even of gross sensuous qualities to God. He who dreads an existence that may give offence, who shrinks from the grossness of a positive predicate, may as well renounce existence altogether. A God who is injured by determinate qualities has not the courage and the strength to exist. Qualities are the fire, the vital breath, the oxygen, the salt of existence. An existence in general, an existence without qualities, is an insipidity, an absurdity. But there can be no more in God than is supplied by religion. Only where man loses his taste for religion, and thus religion itself becomes insipid, does the existence of God become an insipid existence – an existence without qualities.

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[11] The meaning of this parenthetic limitation will be clear in the sequel.

[12] "Les perfections de Dieu sont celles de nos âmes, mais il les possede sans bornes – il y a en nous quelque puissance, quelque connaissance quelque bonté, mais elles sont toutes entières en Dieu." – Leibnitz (Théod. Preface). "Nihil in anima esse putemus eximium, quod non etiam divinæ naturæ proprium sit – Quidquid a Deo alienum extra definitionem animæ" – St. Gregorius Nyss. "Est ergo, ut videtur, disciplinarum omnium pulcherrima et maxima se ipsum nosse; si quis enim se ipsum norit, Deum cognoscet." – Clemens Alex. (Pæd. 1. iii. c. 1).

There is, however, a still milder way of denying the divine predicates than the direct one just described. It is admitted that the predicates of the divine nature are finite, and, more particularly, human qualities, but their rejection is rejected; they are even taken under protection, because it is necessary to man to have a definite conception of God and since he is man he can form no other than a human conception of him. In relation to God, it is said, these predicates are certainly without any objective validity; but to me, if he is to exist for me, he cannot appear otherwise than as he does appear to me, namely, as a being with attributes analogous to the human. But this distinction between what God is in himself, and what he is for me destroys the peace of religion, and is besides in itself an unfounded and untenable distinction. I cannot know whether God is something else in himself or for himself than he is for me; what he is to me is to me all that he is. For me, there lies in these predicates under which he exists for me, what he is in himself, his very nature; he is for me what he can alone ever be for me. The religious man finds perfect satisfaction in that which God is in relation to himself; of any other relation he knows nothing, for God is to him what he can alone be to man. In the distinction above stated, man takes a point of view above himself, *i. e.*, above his nature, the absolute measure of his being; but this transcendentalism is only an illusion; for I can make the distinction between the object as it is in itself, and the object as it is for me, only where an object can really appear otherwise to me, not where it appears to me such as the absolute measure of my nature determines it to appear – such as it must appear to me. It is true that I may have a merely subjective conception, *i. e.*, one which does not arise out of the general constitution of my species; but if my conception is determined by the constitution of my species, the distinction between what an object is in itself, and what it is for me ceases; for this conception is itself an absolute one. The measure of the species is the absolute measure, law, and criterion of man. And, indeed, religion has the conviction that its conceptions, its predicates of God, are such as every man ought to have, and must have, if he would have the true ones – that they are the conceptions necessary to human nature; nay, further, that they are objectively true, representing God as he is. To every religion the gods of *other* religious are only notions concerning God, but its own conception of God is to it God himself, the true God – God such as he is in himself. Religion is satisfied only with a complete Deity, a God without reservation; it will not have a mere phantasm of God; it demands God himself. Religion gives up its own existence when it gives up the nature of God; it is no longer a truth when it renounces the possession of the true God. Scepticism is the arch-enemy of religion; but the distinction between object and conception – between God as he is in himself, and God as he is for me – is a sceptical distinction, and therefore an irreligious one.

That which is to man the self-existent, the highest being, to which he can conceive nothing higher – that is to him the Divine Being. How then should he inquire concerning this being, what he is in himself? If God were an object to the bird, he would be a winged being: the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful, than the winged condition. How ludicrous would it be if this bird pronounced: To me God appears as a bird, but what he is in himself I know not. To the bird the highest nature is the bird-nature; take from him the conception of this, and you take from him the conception of the highest being. How, then, could he ask whether God in himself were winged? To ask whether God is in himself what he is for me, is to ask whether God is God, is to lift oneself above one's God, to rise up against him.

Wherever, therefore, this idea, that the religious predicates are only anthropomorphisms, has taken possession of a man, there has doubt, has unbelief, obtained the mastery of faith. And it is only the inconsequence of faint-heartedness and intellectual imbecility which does not proceed from this idea to the formal negation of the predicates, and from thence to the negation of the subject to which they relate. If thou doubtest the objective truth of the predicates, thou must also doubt the objective truth of the subject whose predicates they are. If thy predicates are anthropomorphisms, the subject of them is an anthropomorphism too. If love, goodness, personality, &c., are human attributes, so also is the subject which thou presupposest, the existence of God, the belief that there is a God, an

anthropomorphism – a presupposition purely human. Whence knowest thou that the belief in a God at all is not a limitation of man's mode of conception? Higher beings – and thou supposest such – are perhaps so blest in themselves, so at unity with themselves, that they are not hung in suspense between themselves and a yet higher being. To know God and not oneself to be God, to know blessedness and not oneself to enjoy it, is a state of disunity, of unhappiness. Higher beings know nothing of this unhappiness; they have no conception of that which they are not.

Thou believest in love as a divine attribute because thou thyself lovest; thou believest that God is a wise, benevolent being because thou knowest nothing better in thyself than benevolence and wisdom; and thou believest that God exists, that therefore he is a subject – whatever exists is a subject, whether it be defined as substance, person, essence, or otherwise – because thou thyself existest, art thyself a subject. Thou knowest no higher human good than to love, than to be good and wise; and even so thou knowest no higher happiness than to exist, to be a subject; for the consciousness of all reality, of all bliss, is for thee bound up in the consciousness of being a subject, of existing. God is an existence, a subject to thee, for the same reason that he is to thee a wise, a blessed, a personal being. The distinction between the divine predicates and the divine subject is only this, that to thee the subject, the existence, does not appear an anthropomorphism, because the conception of it is necessarily involved in thy own existence as a subject, whereas the predicates do appear anthropomorphisms, because their necessity – the necessity that God should be conscious, wise, good, &c., – is not an immediate necessity, identical with the being of man, but is evolved by his self-consciousness, by the activity of his thought. I am a subject, I exist, whether I be wise or unwise, good or bad. To exist is to man the first datum; it constitutes the very idea of the subject; it is presupposed by the predicates. Hence man relinquishes the predicates, but the existence of God is to him a settled, irrefragable, absolutely certain, objective truth. But, nevertheless, this distinction is merely an apparent one. The necessity of the subject lies only in the necessity of the predicate. Thou art a subject only in so far as thou art a human subject; the certainty and reality of thy existence lie only in the certainty and reality of thy human attributes. What the subject is lies only in the predicate; the predicate is the *truth* of the subject – the subject only the personified, existing predicate, the predicate conceived as existing. Subject and predicate are distinguished only as existence and essence. The negation of the predicates is therefore the negation of the subject. What remains of the human subject when abstracted from the human attributes? Even in the language of common life the divine predicates – Providence, Omniscience, Omnipotence – are put for the divine subject.

The certainty of the existence of God, of which it has been said that it is as certain, nay, more certain to man than his own existence, depends only on the certainty of the qualities of God – it is in itself no immediate certainty. To the Christian the existence of the Christian God only is a certainty; to the heathen that of the heathen God only. The heathen did not doubt the existence of Jupiter, because he took no offence at the nature of Jupiter, because he could conceive of God under no other qualities, because to him these qualities were a certainty, a divine reality. The reality of the predicate is the sole guarantee of existence.

Whatever man conceives to be true, he immediately conceives to be real (that is, to have an objective existence), because, originally, only the real is true to him – true in opposition to what is merely conceived, dreamed, imagined. The idea of being, of existence, is the original idea of truth; or, originally, man makes truth dependent on existence, subsequently, existence dependent on truth. Now God is the nature of man regarded as absolute truth, – the truth of man; but God, or, what is the same thing, religion, is as various as are the conditions under which man conceives this his nature, regards it as the highest being. These conditions, then, under which man conceives God, are to him the truth, and for that reason they are also the highest existence, or rather they are existence itself; for only the emphatic, the highest existence, is existence, and deserves this name. Therefore, God is an existent, real being, on the very same ground that he is a particular, definite being; for the qualities of God are nothing else than the essential qualities of man himself, and a particular man is what

he is, has his existence, his reality, only in his particular conditions. Take away from the Greek the quality of being Greek, and you take away his existence. On this ground it is true that for a definite positive religion – that is, relatively – the certainty of the existence of God is *immediate*; for just as involuntarily, as necessarily, as the Greek was a Greek, so necessarily were his gods Greek beings, so necessarily were they real, existent beings. Religion is that conception of the nature of the world and of man which is essential to, *i. e.*, identical with, a man's nature. But man does not stand above this his necessary conception; on the contrary, it stands above him; it animates, determines, governs him. The necessity of a proof, of a middle term to unite qualities with existence, the possibility of a doubt, is abolished. Only that which is apart from my own being is capable of being doubted by me. How then can I doubt of God, who is my being? To doubt of God is to doubt of myself. Only when God is thought of abstractly, when his predicates are the result of philosophic abstraction, arises the distinction or separation between subject and predicate, existence and nature – arises the fiction that the existence or the subject is something else than the predicate, something immediate, indubitable, in distinction from the predicate, which is held to be doubtful. But this is only a fiction. A God who has abstract predicates has also an abstract existence. Existence, being, varies with varying qualities.

The identity of the subject and predicate is clearly evidenced by the progressive development of religion, which is identical with the progressive development of human culture. So long as man is in a mere state of nature, so long is his god a mere nature-god – a personification of some natural force. Where man inhabits houses, he also encloses his gods in temples. The temple is only a manifestation of the value which man attaches to beautiful buildings. Temples in honour of religion are in truth temples in honour of architecture. With the emerging of man from a state of savagery and wildness to one of culture, with the distinction between what is fitting for man and what is not fitting, arises simultaneously the distinction between that which is fitting and that which is not fitting for God. God is the idea of majesty, of the highest dignity: the religious sentiment is the sentiment of supreme fitness. The later more cultured artists of Greece were the first to embody in the statues of the gods the ideas of dignity, of spiritual grandeur, of imperturbable repose and serenity. But why were these qualities in their view attributes, predicates of God? Because they were in themselves regarded by the Greeks as divinities. Why did those artists exclude all disgusting and low passions? Because they perceived them to be unbecoming, unworthy, unhuman, and consequently ungodlike. The Homeric gods eat and drink; – that implies eating and drinking is a divine pleasure. Physical strength is an attribute of the Homeric gods: Zeus is the strongest of the gods. Why? Because physical strength, in and by itself, was regarded as something glorious, divine. To the ancient Germans the highest virtues were those of the warrior; therefore their supreme god was the god of war, Odin, – war, "the original or oldest law." Not the attribute of the divinity, but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being. Thus what theology and philosophy have held to be God, the Absolute, the Infinite, is not God; but that which they have held not to be God is God: namely, the attribute, the quality, whatever has reality. Hence he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being, – for example, love, wisdom, justice, – are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing. And in no wise is the negation of the subject necessarily also a negation of the predicates considered in themselves. These have an intrinsic, independent reality; they force their recognition upon man by their very nature; they are self-evident truths to him; they prove, they attest themselves. It does not follow that goodness, justice, wisdom, are chimæras because the existence of God is a chimæra, nor truths because this is a truth. The idea of God is dependent on the idea of justice, of benevolence; a God who is not benevolent, not just, not wise, is no God; but the converse does not hold. The fact is not that a quality is divine because God has it, but that God has it because it is in itself divine: because without it God would be a defective being. Justice, wisdom, in general every quality which constitutes the divinity of God, is determined and known by itself independently, but the idea of God is determined by the qualities which have thus been previously judged to be worthy of the divine nature; only in the case in which I identify God and justice, in which I think of

God immediately as the reality of the idea of justice, is the idea of God self-determined. But if God as a subject is the determined, while the quality, the predicate, is the determining, then in truth the rank of the godhead is due not to the subject, but to the predicate.

Not until several, and those contradictory, attributes are united in one being, and this being is conceived as personal – the personality being thus brought into especial prominence – not until then is the origin of religion lost sight of, is it forgotten that what the activity of the reflective power has converted into a predicate distinguishable or separable from the subject, was originally the true subject. Thus the Greeks and Romans deified accidents as substances; virtues, states of mind, passions, as independent beings. Man, especially the religious man, is to himself the measure of all things, of all reality. Whatever strongly impresses a man, whatever produces an unusual effect on his mind, if it be only a peculiar, inexplicable sound or note, he personifies as a divine being. Religion embraces all the objects of the world: everything existing has been an object of religious reverence; in the nature and consciousness of religion there is nothing else than what lies in the nature of man and in his consciousness of himself and of the world. Religion has no material exclusively its own. In Rome even the passions of fear and terror had their temples. The Christians also made mental phenomena into independent beings, their own feelings into qualities of things, the passions which governed them into powers which governed the world, in short, predicates of their own nature, whether recognised as such or not, into independent subjective existences. Devils, cobolds, witches, ghosts, angels, were sacred truths as long as the religious spirit held undivided sway over mankind.

In order to banish from the mind the identity of the divine and human predicates, and the consequent identity of the divine and human nature, recourse is had to the idea that God, as the absolute, real Being, has an infinite fulness of various predicates, of which we here know only a part, and those such as are analogous to our own; while the rest, by virtue of which God must thus have quite a different nature from the human or that which is analogous to the human, we shall only know in the future – that is, after death. But an infinite plenitude or multitude of predicates which are really different, so different that the one does not immediately involve the other, is realised only in an infinite plenitude or multitude of different beings or individuals. Thus the human nature presents an infinite abundance of different predicates, and for that very reason it presents an infinite abundance of different individuals. Each new man is a new predicate, a new phasis of humanity. As many as are the men, so many are the powers, the properties of humanity. It is true that there are the same elements in every individual, but under such various conditions and modifications that they appear new and peculiar. The mystery of the inexhaustible fulness of the divine predicates is therefore nothing else than the mystery of human nature considered as an infinitely varied, infinitely modifiable, but, consequently, phenomenal being. Only in the realm of the senses, only in space and time, does there exist a being of really infinite qualities or predicates. Where there are really different predicates there are different times. One man is a distinguished musician, a distinguished author, a distinguished physician; but he cannot compose music, write books, and perform cures in the same moment of time. Time, and not the Hegelian dialectic, is the medium of uniting opposites, contradictories, in one and the same subject. But distinguished and detached from the nature of man, and combined with the idea of God, the infinite fulness of various predicates is a conception without reality, a mere phantasy, a conception derived from the sensible world, but without the essential conditions, without the truth of sensible existence, a conception which stands in direct contradiction with the Divine Being considered as a spiritual, i.e., an abstract, simple, single being; for the predicates of God are precisely of this character, that one involves all the others, because there is no real difference between them. If, therefore, in the present predicates I have not the future, in the present God not the future God, then the future God is not the present, but they are two distinct beings.[13] But

[13] For religious faith there is no other distinction between the present and future God than that the former is an object of faith, of conception, of imagination, while the latter is to be an object of immediate, that is, personal, sensible perception. In this life and in

this distinction is in contradiction with the unity and simplicity of the theological God. Why is a given predicate a predicate of God? Because it is divine in its nature, i.e., because it expresses no limitation, no defect. Why are other predicates applied to him? Because, however various in themselves, they agree in this, that they all alike express perfection, unlimitedness. Hence I can conceive innumerable predicates of God, because they must all agree with the abstract idea of the Godhead, and must have in common that which constitutes every single predicate a divine attribute. Thus it is in the system of Spinoza. He speaks of an infinite number of attributes of the divine substance, but he specifies none except Thought and Extension. Why? Because it is a matter of indifference to know them; nay, because they are in themselves indifferent, superfluous; for with all these innumerable predicates, I yet always mean to say the same thing as when I speak of Thought and Extension. Why is Thought an attribute of substance? Because, according to Spinoza, it is capable of being conceived by itself, because it expresses something indivisible, perfect, infinite. Why Extension or Matter? For the same reason. Thus, substance can have an indefinite number of predicates, because it is not their specific definition, their difference, but their identity, their equivalence, which makes them attributes of substance. Or rather, substance has innumerable predicates only because (how strange!) it has properly no predicate; that is, no definite, real predicate. The indefinite unity which is the product of thought, completes itself by the indefinite multiplicity which is the product of the imagination. Because the predicate is not *multum*, it is *multa*. In truth, the positive predicates are Thought and Extension. In these two infinitely more is said than in the nameless innumerable predicates; for they express something definite – in them I have something. But substance is too indifferent, too apathetic to be *something*; that is, to have qualities and passions; that it may not be something, it is rather nothing.

Now, when it is shown that what the subject is lies entirely in the attributes of the subject; that is, that the predicate is the true subject; it is also proved that if the divine predicates are attributes of the human nature, the subject of those predicates is also of the human nature. But the divine predicates are partly general, partly personal. The general predicates are the metaphysical, but these serve only as external points of support to religion; they are not the characteristic definitions of religion. It is the personal predicates alone which constitute the essence of religion – in which the Divine Being is the object of religion. Such are, for example, that God is a Person, that he is the moral Lawgiver, the Father of mankind, the Holy One, the Just, the Good, the Merciful. It is, however, at once clear, or it will at least be clear in the sequel, with regard to these and other definitions, that, especially as applied to a personality, they are purely human definitions, and that consequently man in religion – in his relation to God – is in relation to his own nature; for to the religious sentiment these predicates are not mere conceptions, mere images, which man forms of God, to be distinguished from that which God is in himself, but truths, facts, realities. Religion knows nothing of anthropomorphisms; to it they are not anthropomorphisms. It is the very essence of religion, that to it these definitions express the nature of God. They are pronounced to be images only by the understanding, which reflects on religion, and which while defending them yet before its own tribunal denies them. But to the religious sentiment God is a real Father, real Love and Mercy; for to it he is a real, living, personal being, and therefore his attributes are also living and personal. Nay, the definitions which are the most sufficing to the religious sentiment are precisely those which give the most offence to the understanding, and which in the process of reflection on religion it denies. Religion is essentially emotion; hence, objectively also, emotion is to it necessarily of a divine nature. Even anger appears to it an emotion not unworthy of God, provided only there be a religious motive at the foundation of this anger.

But here it is also essential to observe, and this phenomenon is an extremely remarkable one, characterising the very core of religion, that in proportion as the divine subject is in reality human, the greater is the apparent difference between God and man; that is, the more, by reflection on religion,

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the next he is the same God; but in the one he is incomprehensible, in the other comprehensible.

by theology, is the identity of the divine and human denied, and the human, considered as such, is depreciated.[14] The reason of this is, that as what is positive in the conception of the divine being can only be human, the conception of man, as an object of consciousness, can only be negative. To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must be nothing. But he desires to be nothing in himself, because what he takes from himself is not lost to him, since it is preserved in God. Man has his being in God; why then should he have it in himself? Where is the necessity of positing the same thing twice, of having it twice? What man withdraws from himself, what he renounces in himself, he only enjoys in an incomparably higher and fuller measure in God.

The monks made a vow of chastity to God; they mortified the sexual passion in themselves, but therefore they had in heaven, in the Virgin Mary, the image of woman – an image of love. They could the more easily dispense with real woman in proportion as an ideal woman was an object of love to them. The greater the importance they attached to the denial of sensuality, the greater the importance of the heavenly virgin for them: she was to them in the place of Christ, in the stead of God. The more the sensual tendencies are renounced, the more sensual is the God to whom they are sacrificed. For whatever is made an offering to God has an especial value attached to it; in it God is supposed to have especial pleasure. That which is the highest in the estimation of man is naturally the highest in the estimation of his God; what pleases man pleases God also. The Hebrews did not offer to Jehovah unclean, ill-conditioned animals; on the contrary, those which they most highly prized, which they themselves ate, were also the food of God (*Cibus Dei*, Lev. iii. 2). Wherever, therefore, the denial of the sensual delights is made a special offering, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God, there the highest value is attached to the senses, and the sensuality which has been renounced is unconsciously restored, in the fact that God takes the place of the material delights which have been renounced. The nun weds herself to God; she has a heavenly bridegroom, the monk a heavenly bride. But the heavenly virgin is only a sensible presentation of a general truth, having relation to the essence of religion. Man denies as to himself only what he attributes to God. Religion abstracts from man, from the world; but it can only abstract from the limitations, from the phenomena; in short, from the negative, not from the essence, the positive, of the world and humanity: hence, in the very abstraction and negation it must recover that from which it abstracts, or believes itself to abstract. And thus, in reality, whatever religion consciously denies – always supposing that what is denied by it is something essential, true, and consequently incapable of being ultimately denied – it unconsciously restores in God. Thus, in religion man denies his reason; of himself he knows nothing of God, his thoughts are only worldly, earthly; he can only believe what God reveals to him. But on this account the thoughts of God are human, earthly thoughts: like man, he has plans in his mind, he accommodates himself to circumstances and grades of intelligence, like a tutor with his pupils; he calculates closely the effect of his gifts and revelations; he observes man in all his doings; he knows all things, even the most earthly, the commonest, the most trivial. In brief, man in relation to God denies his own knowledge, his own thoughts, that he may place them in God. Man gives up his personality; but in return, God, the Almighty, infinite, unlimited being, is a person; he denies human dignity, the human *ego*; but in return God is to him a selfish, egoistical being, who in all things seeks only himself, his own honour, his own ends; he represents God as simply seeking the satisfaction of his own selfishness, while yet he frowns on that of every other being; his God is the very luxury of egoism.[15] Religion further denies goodness as a quality of human nature; man is wicked, corrupt, incapable of good; but,

[14] Inter creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos major sit dissimilitudo notanda. – Later. Conc. can. 2. (Summa Omn. Conc. Carranza. Antw. 1559. p. 326.) The last distinction between man and God, between the finite and infinite nature, to which the religious speculative imagination soars, is the distinction between Something and Nothing, Ens and Non-Ens; for only in Nothing is all community with other beings abolished.

[15] Gloriam suam plus amat Deus quam omnes creaturas. “God can only love himself, can only think of himself, can only work for himself. In creating man, God seeks his own ends, his own glory,” &c. – Vide P. Bayle, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philos. u. Menschh., pp. 104–107.

on the other hand, God is only good – the Good Being. Man's nature demands as an object goodness, personified as God; but is it not hereby declared that goodness is an essential tendency of man? If my heart is wicked, my understanding perverted, how can I perceive and feel the holy to be holy, the good to be good? Could I perceive the beauty of a fine picture if my mind were æsthetically an absolute piece of perversion? Though I may not be a painter, though I may not have the power of producing what is beautiful myself, I must yet have æsthetic feeling, æsthetic comprehension, since I perceive the beauty that is presented to me externally. Either goodness does not exist at all for man, or, if it does exist, therein is revealed to the individual man the holiness and goodness of human nature. That which is absolutely opposed to my nature, to which I am united by no bond of sympathy, is not even conceivable or perceptible by me. The holy is in opposition to me only as regards the modifications of my personality, but as regards my fundamental nature it is in unity with me. The holy is a reproach to my sinfulness; in it I recognise myself as a sinner; but in so doing, while I blame myself, I acknowledge what I am not, but ought to be, and what, for that very reason, I, according to my destination, can be; for an "ought" which has no corresponding capability does not affect me, is a ludicrous chimæra without any true relation to my mental constitution. But when I acknowledge goodness as my destination, as my law, I acknowledge it, whether consciously or unconsciously, as my own nature. Another nature than my own, one different in quality, cannot touch me. I can perceive sin as sin, only when I perceive it to be a contradiction of myself with myself – that is, of my personality with my fundamental nature. As a contradiction of the absolute, considered as another being, the feeling of sin is inexplicable, unmeaning.

The distinction between Augustinianism and Pelagianism consists only in this, that the former expresses after the manner of religion what the latter expresses after the manner of Rationalism. Both say the same thing, both vindicate the goodness of man; but Pelagianism does it directly, in a rationalistic and moral form; Augustinianism indirectly, in a mystical, that is, a religious form.[16] For that which is given to man's God is in truth given to man himself; what a man declares concerning God, he in truth declares concerning himself. Augustinianism would be a truth, and a truth opposed to Pelagianism, only if man had the devil for his God, and, with the consciousness that he was the devil, honoured, reverenced, and worshipped him as the highest being. But so long as man adores a good being as his God, so long does he contemplate in God the goodness of his own nature.

As with the doctrine of the radical corruption of human nature, so is it with the identical doctrine, that man can do nothing good, *i. e.*, in truth, nothing of himself – by his own strength. For the denial of human strength and spontaneous moral activity to be true, the moral activity of God must also be denied; and we must say, with the Oriental nihilist or pantheist: the Divine being is absolutely without will or action, indifferent, knowing nothing of the discrimination between evil and good. But he who defines God as an active being, and not only so, but as morally active and morally critical, – as a being who loves, works, and rewards good, punishes, rejects, and condemns evil, – he who thus defines God only in appearance denies human activity, in fact, making it the highest, the most real activity. He who makes God act humanly, declares human activity to be divine; he says: A god who is not active, and not morally or humanly active, is no god; and thus he makes the idea of the Godhead dependent on the idea of activity, that is, of human activity, for a higher he knows not.

Man – this is the mystery of religion – projects his being into objectivity,[17] and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject; he thinks

[16] Pelagianism denies God, religion – isti tantam tribuunt potestatem voluntati, ut pietati auferant orationem. (Augustin de Nat. et Grat. cont. Pelagium, c. 58.) It has only the Creator, *i. e.*, Nature, as a basis, not the Saviour, the true God of the religious sentiment – in a word, it denies God; but, as a consequence of this, it elevates man into a God, since it makes him a being not needing God, self-sufficing, independent. (See on this subject Luther against Erasmus and Augustine, l. c. c. 33.) Augustinianism denies man; but, as a consequence of this, it reduces God to the level of man, even to the ignominy of the cross, for the sake of man. The former puts man in the place of God, the latter puts God in the place of man; both lead to the same result – the distinction is only apparent, a pious illusion. Augustinianism is only an inverted Pelagianism; what to the latter is a subject, is to the former an object.

[17] The religious, the original mode in which man becomes objective to himself, is (as is clearly enough, explained in this work)

of himself, is an object to himself, but as the object of an object, of another being than himself. Thus here. Man is an object to God. That man is good or evil is not indifferent to God; no! He has a lively, profound interest in man's being good; he wills that man should be good, happy – for without goodness there is no happiness. Thus the religious man virtually retracts the nothingness of human activity, by making his dispositions and actions an object to God, by making man the end of God – for that which is an object to the mind is an end in action; by making the divine activity a means of human salvation. God acts, that man may be good and happy. Thus man, while he is apparently humiliated to the lowest degree, is in truth exalted to the highest. Thus, in and through God, man has in view himself alone. It is true that man places the aim of his action in God, but God has no other aim of action than the moral and eternal salvation of man: thus man has in fact no other aim than himself. The divine activity is not distinct from the human.

How could the divine activity work on me as its object, nay, work in me, if it were essentially different from me; how could it have a human aim, the aim of ameliorating and blessing man, if it were not itself human? Does not the purpose determine the nature of the act? When man makes his moral improvement an aim to himself, he has divine resolutions, divine projects; but also, when God seeks the salvation of man, he has human ends and a human mode of activity corresponding to these ends. Thus in God man has only his own activity as an object. But for the very reason that he regards his own activity as objective, goodness only as an object, he necessarily receives the impulse, the motive not from himself, but from this object. He contemplates his nature as external to himself, and this nature as goodness; thus it is self-evident, it is mere tautology to say that the impulse to good comes only from thence where he places the good.

God is the highest subjectivity of man abstracted from himself; hence man can do nothing of himself, all goodness comes from God. The more subjective God is, the more completely does man divest himself of his subjectivity, because God is, *per se*, his relinquished self, the possession of which he however again vindicates to himself. As the action of the arteries drives the blood into the extremities, and the action of the veins brings it back again, as life in general consists in a perpetual systole and diastole; so is it in religion. In the religious systole man propels his own nature from himself, he throws himself outward; in the religious diastole he receives the rejected nature into his heart again. God alone is the being who acts of himself, – this is the force of repulsion in religion; God is the being who acts in me, with me, through me, upon me, for me, is the principle of my salvation, of my good dispositions and actions, consequently my own good principle and nature, – this is the force of attraction in religion.

The course of religious development which has been generally indicated consists specifically in this, that man abstracts more and more from God, and attributes more and more to himself. This is especially apparent in the belief in revelation. That which to a later age or a cultured people is given by nature or reason, is to an earlier age, or to a yet uncultured people, given by God. Every tendency of man, however natural – even the impulse to cleanliness, was conceived by the Israelites as a positive divine ordinance. From this example we again see that God is lowered, is conceived more entirely on the type of ordinary humanity, in proportion as man detracts from himself. How can the self-humiliation of man go further than when he disclaims the capability of fulfilling spontaneously the requirements of common decency?[18] The Christian religion, on the other hand, distinguished the impulses and passions of man according to their quality, their character; it represented only good emotions, good dispositions, good thoughts, as revelations, operations – that is, as dispositions, feelings, thoughts, – of God; for what God reveals is a quality of God himself: that of which the heart is full overflows the lips; as is the effect such is the cause; as the revelation, such the being who

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to be distinguished from the mode in which this occurs in reflection and speculation; the latter is voluntary, the former involuntary, necessary – as necessary as art, as speech. With the progress of time, it is true; theology coincides with religion.

[18] Deut. xxiii. 12, 13.

reveals himself. A God who reveals himself in good dispositions is a God whose essential attribute is only moral perfection. The Christian religion distinguishes inward moral purity from external physical purity; the Israelites identified the two.[19] In relation to the Israelitish religion, the Christian religion is one of criticism and freedom. The Israelite trusted himself to do nothing except what was commanded by God; he was without will even in external things; the authority of religion extended itself even to his food. The Christian religion, on the other hand, in all these external things made man dependent on himself, *i. e.*, placed in man what the Israelite placed out of himself in God. Israel is the most complete presentation of Positivism in religion. In relation to the Israelite, the Christian is an *esprit fort*, a free-thinker. Thus do things change. What yesterday was still religion is no longer such to-day; and what to-day is atheism, to-morrow will be religion.

[19] See, for example, Gen. xxxv. 2; Levit. xi. 44; xx. 26; and the Commentary of Le Clerc on these passages.

PART I.
THE TRUE OR ANTHROPOLOGICAL ESSENCE OF RELIGION

CHAPTER II.
GOD AS A BEING OF THE UNDERSTANDING

Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself. God is not what man is – man is not what God is. God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is perfect, man imperfect; God eternal, man temporal; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God and man are extremes: God is the absolutely positive, the sum of all realities; man the absolutely negative, comprehending all negations.

But in religion man contemplates his own latent nature. Hence it must be shown that this antithesis, this differencing of God and man, with which religion begins, is a differencing of man with his own nature.

The inherent necessity of this proof is at once apparent from this, – that if the divine nature, which is the object of religion, were really different from the nature of man, a division, a disunion could not take place. If God is really a different being from myself, why should his perfection trouble me? Disunion exists only between beings who are at variance, but who ought to be one, who can be one, and who consequently in nature, in truth, are one. On this general ground, then, the nature with which man feels himself in disunion must be inborn, immanent in himself, but at the same time it must be of a different character from that nature or power which gives him the feeling, the consciousness of reconciliation, of union with God, or, what is the same thing, with himself.

This nature is nothing else than the intelligence – the reason or the understanding. God as the antithesis of man, as a being not human, *i. e.*, not personally human, is the objective nature of the understanding. The pure, perfect divine nature is the self-consciousness of the understanding, the consciousness which the understanding has of its own perfection. The understanding knows nothing of the sufferings of the heart; it has no desires, no passions, no wants, and, for that reason, no deficiencies and weaknesses, as the heart has. Men in whom the intellect predominates, who, with one-sided but all the more characteristic definiteness, embody and personify for us the nature of the understanding, are free from the anguish of the heart, from the passions, the excesses of the man who has strong emotions; they are not passionately interested in any finite, *i. e.*, particular object; they do not give themselves in pledge; they are free. “To want nothing, and by this freedom from wants to become like the immortal gods;” – “not to subject ourselves to things, but things to us;” – “all is vanity;” – these and similar sayings are the mottoes of the men who are governed by abstract understanding. The understanding is that part of our nature which is neutral, impassible, not to bribed, not subject to illusions – the pure, passionless light of the intelligence. It is the categorical, impartial consciousness of the fact as fact, because it is itself of an objective nature. It is the consciousness of the uncontradictory, because it is itself the uncontradictory unity, the source of logical identity. It is the consciousness of law, necessity, rule, measure, because it is itself the activity of law, the necessity of the nature of things under the form of spontaneous activity, the rule of rules, the absolute measure, the measure of measures. Only by the understanding can man judge and act in contradiction with his dearest human, that is, personal feelings, when the God of the understanding, – law, necessity, right, – commands it. The father who, as a judge, condemns his own son to death because he knows him to be guilty, can do this only as a rational, not as an emotional being. The understanding shows us the faults

and weaknesses even of our beloved ones; it shows us even our own. It is for this reason that it so often throws us into painful collision with ourselves, with our own hearts. We do not like to give reason the upper hand: we are too tender to ourselves to carry out the true, but hard, relentless verdict of the understanding. The understanding is the power which has relation to species: the heart represents particular circumstances, individuals, – the understanding, general circumstances, universals; it is the superhuman, *i. e.*, the impersonal power in man. Only by and in the understanding has man the power of abstraction from himself, from his subjective being, – of exalting himself to general ideas and relations, of distinguishing the object from the impressions which it produces on his feelings, of regarding it in and by itself without reference to human personality. Philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, physics, in short, science in general, is the practical proof, because it is the product of this truly infinite and divine activity. Religious anthropomorphisms, therefore, are in contradiction with the understanding; it repudiates their application to God; it denies them. But this God, free from anthropomorphisms, impartial, passionless, is nothing else than the nature of the understanding itself regarded as objective.

God as God, that is, as a being not finite, not human, not materially conditioned, not phenomenal, is only an object of thought. He is the incorporeal, formless, incomprehensible – the abstract, negative being: he is known, *i. e.*, becomes an object, only by abstraction and negation (*viâ negationis*). Why? Because he is nothing but the objective nature of the thinking power, or in general of the power or activity, name it what you will, whereby man is conscious of reason, of mind, of intelligence. There is no other spirit, that is (for the idea of spirit is simply the idea of thought, of intelligence, of understanding, every other spirit being a spectre of the imagination), no other intelligence which man can believe in or conceive than that intelligence which enlightens him, which is active in him. He can do nothing more than separate the intelligence from the limitations of his own individuality. The "infinite spirit," in distinction from the finite, is therefore nothing else than the intelligence disengaged from the limits of individuality and corporeality, – for individuality and corporeality are inseparable, – intelligence posited in and by itself. God, said the schoolmen, the Christian fathers, and long before them the heathen philosophers, – God is immaterial essence, intelligence, spirit, pure understanding. Of God as God no image can be made; but canst thou frame an image of mind? Has mind a form? Is not its activity the most inexplicable, the most incapable of representation? God is incomprehensible; but knowest thou the nature of the intelligence? Hast thou searched out the mysterious operation of thought, the hidden nature of self-consciousness? Is not self-consciousness the enigma of enigmas? Did not the old mystics, schoolmen, and fathers, long ago compare the incomprehensibility of the divine nature with that of the human intelligence, and thus, in truth, identify the nature of God with the nature of man?[20] God as God – as a purely thinkable being, an object of the intellect – is thus nothing else than the reason in its utmost intensification become objective to itself. It is asked what is the understanding or the reason? The answer is found in the idea of God. Everything must express itself, reveal itself, make itself objective, affirm itself. God is the reason expressing, affirming itself as the highest existence. To the imagination, the reason is the revelation of God; but to the reason, God is the revelation of the reason; since what reason is, what it can do, is first made objective in God. God is a need of the intelligence, a necessary thought – the highest degree of the thinking power. "The reason cannot rest in sensuous things;" it can find contentment only when it penetrates to the highest, first necessary being, which can be an object to the reason alone. Why? Because with the conception of this being it first completes itself, because only in the idea of the highest nature is the highest nature of reason existent, the highest step of the thinking power attained: and it is a general truth, that we feel a blank, a void, a want in ourselves,

[20] Augustine, in his work *Contra Academicos*, which he wrote when he was still in some measure a heathen, says (l. iii. c. 12) that the highest good of man consists in the mind or in the reason. On the other hand, in his *Libr. Retractationum*, which he wrote as a distinguished Christian and theologian, he revises (l. i. c. 1) this declaration as follows: – Verius dixissem in Deo. Ipso enim mens fruitur, ut beata sit, tanquam summo bono suo. But is there any distinction here? Where my highest good is, is not there my nature also?

and are consequently unhappy and unsatisfied, so long as we have not come to the last degree of a power, to that *quo nihil majus cogitari potest*, – so long as we cannot bring our inborn capacity for this or that art, this or that science, to the utmost proficiency. For only in the highest proficiency is art truly art; only in its highest degree is thought truly thought, reason. Only when thy thought is God dost thou truly think, rigorously speaking; for only God is the realised, consummate, exhausted thinking power. Thus in conceiving God, man first conceives reason as it truly is, though by means of the imagination he conceives this divine nature as distinct from reason, because as a being affected by external things he is accustomed always to distinguish the object from the conception of it. And here he applies the same process to the conception of the reason, thus for an existence in reason, in thought, substituting an existence in space and time, from which he had, nevertheless, previously abstracted it. God, as a metaphysical being, is the intelligence satisfied in itself, or rather, conversely, the intelligence, satisfied in itself, thinking itself as the absolute being, is God as a metaphysical being. Hence all metaphysical predicates of God are *real* predicates only when they are recognised as belonging to thought, to intelligence, to the understanding.

The understanding is that which conditionates and co-ordinates all things, that which places all things in reciprocal dependence and connection, because it is itself immediate and unconditioned; it inquires for the cause of all things, because it has its own ground and end in itself. Only that which itself is nothing deduced, nothing derived, can deduce and construct, can regard all besides itself as derived; just as only that which exists for its own sake can view and treat other things as means and instruments. The understanding is thus the original, primitive being. The understanding derives all things from God as the first cause; it finds the world, without an intelligent cause, given over to senseless, aimless chance; that is, it finds only in itself, in its own nature, the efficient and the final cause of the world – the existence of the world is only then clear and comprehensible when it sees the explanation of that existence in the source of all clear and intelligible ideas, *i. e.*, in itself. The being that works with design towards certain ends, *i. e.*, with understanding, is alone the being that to the understanding has immediate certitude, self-evidence. Hence that which of itself has no designs, no purpose, must have the cause of its existence in the design of another, and that an intelligent being. And thus the understanding posits its own nature as the causal, first, premundane existence —*i. e.*, being in rank the first but in time the last, it makes itself the first in time also.

The understanding is to itself the criterion of all reality. That which is opposed to the understanding, that which is self-contradictory, is nothing; that which contradicts reason contradicts God. For example, it is a contradiction of reason to connect with the idea of the highest reality the limitations of definite time and place; and hence reason denies these of God as contradicting his nature. The reason can only believe in a God who is accordant with its own nature, in a God who is not beneath its own dignity, who, on the contrary, is a realisation of its own nature: *i. e.*, the reason believes only in itself, in the absolute reality of its own nature. The reason is not dependent on God, but God on the reason. Even in the age of miracles and faith in authority, the understanding constitutes itself, at least formally, the criterion of divinity. God is all and can do all, it was said, by virtue of his omnipotence; but nevertheless he is nothing and he can do nothing which contradicts himself, *i. e.*, reason. Even omnipotence cannot do what is contrary to reason. Thus above the divine omnipotence stands the higher power of reason; above the nature of God the nature of the understanding, as the criterion of that which is to be affirmed and denied of God, the criterion of the positive and negative. Canst thou believe in a God who is an unreasonable and wicked being? No, indeed; but why not? Because it is in contradiction with thy understanding to accept a wicked and unreasonable being as divine. What then dost thou affirm, what is an object to thee, in God? Thy own understanding. God is thy highest idea, the supreme effort of thy understanding, thy highest power of thought. God is the sum of all realities, *i. e.*, the sum of all affirmations of the understanding. That which I recognise in the understanding as essential I place in God as existent: God *is* what the understanding thinks as the

highest. But in what I perceive to be essential is revealed the nature of my understanding, is shown the power of my thinking faculty.

Thus the understanding is the *ens realissimum*, the most real being of the old onto-theology. "Fundamentally," says onto-theology, "we cannot conceive God otherwise than by attributing to him without limit all the real qualities which we find in ourselves."[21] Our positive, essential qualities, our realities, are therefore the realities of God, but in us they exist with, in God without, limits. But what then withdraws the limits from the realities, what does away with the limits? The understanding. What, according to this, is the nature conceived without limits, but the nature of the understanding releasing, abstracting itself from all limits? As thou thinkest God, such is thy thought; – the measure of thy God is the measure of thy understanding. If thou conceivest God as limited, thy understanding is limited; if thou conceivest God as unlimited, thy understanding is unlimited; If, for example, thou conceivest God as a corporeal being, corporeality is the boundary, the limit of thy understanding; thou canst conceive nothing without a body. If, on the contrary, thou deniest corporeality of God, this is a corroboration and proof of the freedom of thy understanding from the limitation of corporeality. In the unlimited divine nature thou representest only thy unlimited understanding. And when thou declarest this unlimited being the ultimate essence, the highest being, thou sayest in reality nothing else than this: the *être suprême*, the highest being, is the understanding.

The understanding is further the self-subsistent and independent being. That which has no understanding is not self-subsistent, is dependent. A man without understanding is a man without will. He who has no understanding allows himself to be deceived, imposed upon, used as an instrument by others. How shall he whose understanding is the tool of another have an independent will? Only he who thinks is free and independent. It is only by the understanding that man reduces the things around and beneath him to mere means of his own existence. In general, that only is self-subsistent and independent which is an end to itself, an object to itself. That which is an end and object to itself is for that very reason – in so far as it is an object to itself – no longer a means and object for another being. To be without understanding is, in one word, to exist for another, – to be an object: to have understanding is to exist for oneself, – to be a subject. But that which no longer exists for another, but for itself, rejects all dependence on another being. It is true we, as physical beings, depend on the beings external to us, even as to the modifications of thought; but in so far as we think, in the activity of the understanding as such, we are dependent on no other being. Activity of thought is spontaneous activity. "When I think, I am conscious that my *ego* in me thinks, and not some other thing. I conclude, therefore, that this thinking in me does not inhere in another thing outside of me, but in myself, consequently that I am a substance, *i. e.*, that I exist by myself, without being a predicate of another being."[22] Although we always need the air, yet as natural philosophers we convert the air from an object of our physical need into an object of the self-sufficing activity of thought, *i. e.*, into a mere thing for us. In breathing I am the object of the air, the air the subject; but when I make the air an object of thought, of investigation, when I analyse it, I reverse this relation, – I make myself the subject, the air an object. But that which is the object of another being is dependent. Thus the plant is dependent on air and light, that is, it is an object for air, and light, not for itself. It is true that air and light are reciprocally an object for the plant. Physical life in general is nothing else than this perpetual interchange of the objective and subjective relation. We consume the air and are consumed by it; we enjoy and are enjoyed. The understanding alone enjoys all things without being itself enjoyed; it is the self-enjoying, self-sufficing existence – the absolute subject – the subject which cannot be reduced to the object of another being, because it makes all things objects, predicates of itself, – which comprehends all things in itself, because it is itself not a thing, because it is free from all things.

[21] Kant, Vorles. über d. philos. Religionsl., Leipzig, 1817, p. 39.

[22] Kant, l. c., p. 80.

That is dependent the possibility of whose existence lies out of itself; that is independent which has the possibility of its existence in itself. Life therefore involves the contradiction of an existence at once dependent and independent, – the contradiction that its possibility lies both in itself and out of itself. The understanding alone is free from this and other contradictions of life; it is the essence perfectly self-subsistent, perfectly at one with itself, perfectly self-existent.[23] Thinking is existence in self; life, as differenced from thought, existence out of self: life is to give from oneself; thought is to take into oneself. Existence out of self is the world; existence in self is God. To think is to be God. The act of thought, as such, is the freedom of the immortal gods from all external limitations and necessities of life.

The unity of the understanding is the unity of God. To the understanding the consciousness of its unity and universality is essential; the understanding is itself nothing else than the consciousness of itself as absolute identity, *i. e.*, that which is accordant with the understanding is to it an absolute, universally valid, law; it is impossible to the understanding to think that what is self-contradictory, false, irrational, can anywhere be true, and, conversely, that what is true, rational, can anywhere be false and irrational. "There may be intelligent beings who are not like me, and yet I am certain that there are no intelligent beings who know laws and truths different from those which I recognise; for every mind necessarily sees that two and two make four, and that one must prefer one's friend to one's dog."[24] Of an essentially different understanding from that which affirms itself in man, I have not the remotest conception, the faintest adumbration. On the contrary, every understanding which I posit as different from my own, is only a position of my own understanding, *i. e.*, an idea of my own, a conception which falls within my power of thought, and thus expresses my understanding. What I think, that I myself do, of course only in purely intellectual matters; what I think of as united, I unite; what I think of as distinct, I distinguish; what I think of as abolished, as negatived, that I myself abolish and negative. For example, if I conceive an understanding in which the intuition or reality of the object is immediately united with the thought of it, I actually unite it; my understanding or my imagination is itself the power of uniting these distinct or opposite ideas. How would it be possible for me to conceive them united – whether this conception be clear or confused – if I did not unite them in myself? But whatever may be the conditions of the understanding which a given human individual may suppose as distinguished from his own, this other understanding is only the understanding which exists in man in general – the understanding conceived apart from the limits of this particular individual. Unity is involved in the idea of the understanding. The impossibility for the understanding to think two supreme beings, two infinite substances, two Gods, is the impossibility for the understanding to contradict itself, to deny its own nature, to think of itself as divided.

The understanding is the infinite being. Infinitude is immediately involved in unity, and finiteness in plurality. Finiteness – in the metaphysical sense – rests on the distinction of the existence from the essence, of the individual from the species; infinitude, on the unity of existence and essence. Hence, that is finite which can be compared with other beings of the same species; that is infinite which has nothing like itself, which consequently does not stand as an individual under a species, but is species and individual in one, essence and existence in one. But such is the understanding; it has its essence in itself, consequently it has nothing, together with or external to itself, which can be ranged beside it; it is incapable of being compared, because it is itself the source of all combinations and comparisons; immeasurable, because it is the measure of all measures, – we

[23] To guard against mistake, I observe that I do not apply to the understanding the expression self-subsistent essence, and other terms of a like character, in my own sense, but that I am here placing myself on the standpoint of onto-theology, of metaphysical theology in general, in order to show that metaphysics is resolvable into psychology, that the onto-theological predicates are merely predicates of the understanding.

[24] Malebranche. (See the author's Geschichte der Philos., 1 Bd. p. 322.) "Exstaretne alibi diversa ab hac ratio? censereturque injustum aut scelestum in Jove aut Marte, quod apud nos justum ac præclarum habetur? Certe nec verisimile nec omnino possibile." – Chr. Hugenii (Cosmotheoros, lib. i.).

measure all things by the understanding alone; it can be circumscribed by no higher generalisation, it can be ranged under no species, because it is itself the principle of all generalising, of all classification, because it circumscribes all things and beings. The definitions which the speculative philosophers and theologians give of God, as the being in whom existence and essence are not separable, who himself *is* all the attributes which he *has*, so that predicate and subject are with him identical, – all these definitions are thus ideas drawn solely from the nature of the understanding.

Lastly, the understanding or the reason is the necessary being. Reason exists because only the existence of the reason is reason; because, if there were no reason, no consciousness, all would be nothing; existence would be equivalent to non-existence. Consciousness first founds the distinction between existence and non-existence. In consciousness is first revealed the value of existence, the value of nature. Why, in general, does something exist? why does the world exist? on the simple ground that if something did not exist, nothing would exist; if reason did not exist, there would be only unreason; thus the world exists because it is an absurdity that the world should not exist. In the absurdity of its non-existence is found the true reason of its existence, in the groundlessness of the supposition that it were not the reason that it is. Nothing, non-existence, is aimless, nonsensical, irrational. Existence alone has an aim, a foundation, rationality; existence is, because only existence is reason and truth; existence is the absolute necessity. What is the cause of conscious existence, of life? The need of life. But to whom is it a need? To that which does not live. It is not a being who saw that made the eye: to one who saw already, to what purpose would be the eye? No! only the being who saw not needed the eye. We are all come into the world without the operation of knowledge and will; but we are come that knowledge and will may exist. Whence, then, came the world? Out of necessity; not out of a necessity which lies in another being distinct from itself – that is a pure contradiction, – but out of its own inherent necessity; out of the necessity of necessity; because without the world there would be no necessity; without necessity, no reason, no understanding. The nothing, out of which the world came, is nothing without the world. It is true that thus, negativity, as the speculative philosophers express themselves —*nothing* is the cause of the world; – but a nothing which abolishes itself, *i. e.*, a nothing which could not have existed if there had been no world. It is true that the world springs out of a want, out of privation, but it is false speculation to make this privation an ontological being: this want is simply *the* want which lies in the supposed non-existence of the world. Thus the world is only necessary out of itself and through itself. But the necessity of the world is the necessity of reason. The reason, as the sum of all realities, – for what are all the glories of the world without light, much more external light without internal light? – the reason is the most indispensable being – the profoundest and most essential necessity. In the reason first lies the self-consciousness of existence, self-conscious existence; in the reason is first revealed the end, the meaning of existence. Reason is existence objective to itself as its own end; the ultimate tendency of things. That which is an object to itself is the highest, the final being; that which has power over itself is almighty.

CHAPTER III.
GOD AS A MORAL BEING, OR LAW

God as God – the infinite, universal, non-anthropomorphic being of the understanding, has no more significance for religion than a fundamental general principle has for a special science; it is merely the ultimate point of support, – as it were, the mathematical point of religion. The consciousness of human limitation or nothingness which is united with the idea of this being, is by no means a religious consciousness; on the contrary, it characterises sceptics, materialists, and pantheists. The belief in God – at least in the God of religion – is only lost where, as in scepticism, pantheism, and materialism, the belief in man is lost, at least in man such as he is presupposed in religion. As little then as religion has any influential belief in the nothingness of man,[25] so little has it any influential belief in that abstract being with which the consciousness of this nothingness is united. The vital elements of religion are those only which make man an object to man. To deny man is to deny religion.

It certainly is the interest of religion that its object should be distinct from man; but it is also, nay, yet more, its interest that this object should have human attributes. That he should be a distinct being concerns his existence only; but that he should be human concerns his essence. If he be of a different nature, how can his existence or non-existence be of any importance to man? How can he take so profound an interest in an existence in which his own nature has no participation?

To give an example. "When I believe that the human nature alone has suffered for me, Christ is a poor Saviour to me: in that case, he needs a Saviour himself." And thus, out of the need for salvation is postulated something transcending human nature, a being different from man. But no sooner is this being postulated than there arises the yearning of man after himself, after his own nature, and man is immediately re-established. "Here is God, who is not man and never yet became man. But this is not a God for me… That would be a miserable Christ to me, who … should be nothing but a purely separate God and divine person … without humanity. No, my friend; where thou givest me God, thou must give me humanity too."[26]

In religion man seeks contentment; religion is his highest good. But how could he find consolation and peace in God if God were an essentially different being? How can I share the peace of a being if I am not of the same nature with him? If his nature is different from mine, his peace is essentially different, – it is no peace for me. How then can I become a partaker of his peace if I am not a partaker of his nature? but how can I be a partaker of his nature if I am really of a different nature? Every being experiences peace only in its own element, only in the conditions of its own nature. Thus, if man feels peace in God, he feels it only because in God he first attains his true nature, because here, for the first time, he is with himself, because everything in which he hitherto sought peace, and which he hitherto mistook for his nature, was alien to him. Hence, if man is to find contentment in God, he must find himself in God. "No one will taste of God but as he wills, namely – in the humanity of Christ; and if thou dost not find God thus, thou wilt never have rest."[27] "Everything finds rest on the place in which it was born. The place where I was born is God. God is my fatherland. Have I a father in God? Yes, I have not only a father, but I have myself in him; before I lived in myself, I lived already in God."[28]

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[25] In religion, the representation or expression of the nothingness of man before God is the anger of God; for as the love of God is the affirmation, his anger is the negation of man. But even this anger is not taken in earnest. "God … is not really angry. He is not thoroughly in earnest even when we think that he is angry, and punishes." – Luther (Th. viii. p. 208).

[26] Luther, Concordienbuch, Art. 8, Erklär.

[27] Luther, Sämmtliche Schriften und Werke, Leipzig, 1729, fol. Th. iii. p. 589. It is according to this edition that references are given throughout the present work.

[28] Predigten etzlicher Lehrer vor und zu Tauleri Zeiten, Hamburg, 1621, p. 81.

A God, therefore, who expresses only the nature of the understanding does not satisfy religion, is not the God of religion. The understanding is interested not only in man, but in the things out of man, in universal nature. The intellectual man forgets even himself in the contemplation of nature. The Christians scorned the pagan philosophers because, instead of thinking of themselves, of their own salvation, they had thought only of things out of themselves. The Christian thinks only of himself. By the understanding an insect is contemplated with as much enthusiasm as the image of God – man. The understanding is the absolute indifference and identity of all things and beings. It is not Christianity, not religious enthusiasm, but the enthusiasm of the understanding that we have to thank for botany, mineralogy, zoology, physics, and astronomy. The understanding is universal, pantheistic, the love of the universe; but the grand characteristic of religion, and of the Christian religion especially, is that it is thoroughly anthropotheistic, the exclusive love of man for himself, the exclusive self-affirmation of the human nature, that is, of subjective human nature; for it is true that the understanding also affirms the nature of man, but it is his objective nature, which has reference to the object for the sake of the object, and the manifestation of which is science. Hence it must be something entirely different from the nature of the understanding which is an object to man in religion, if he is to find contentment therein, and this something will necessarily be the very kernel of religion.

Of all the attributes which the understanding assigns to God, that which in religion, and especially in the Christian religion, has the pre-eminence, is moral perfection. But God as a morally perfect being is nothing else than the realised idea, the fulfilled law of morality, the moral nature of man posited as the absolute being; man's own nature, for the moral God requires man to be as he himself is: Be ye holy for I am holy; man's own conscience, for how could he otherwise tremble before the Divine Being, accuse himself before him, and make him the judge of his inmost thoughts and feelings?

But the consciousness of the absolutely perfect moral nature, especially as an abstract being separate from man, leaves us cold and empty, because we feel the distance, the chasm between ourselves and this being; – it is a dispiriting consciousness, for it is the consciousness of our personal nothingness, and of the kind which is the most acutely felt – moral nothingness. The consciousness of the divine omnipotence and eternity in opposition to my limitation in space and time does not afflict me: for omnipotence does not command me to be myself omnipotent, eternity, to be myself eternal. But I cannot have the idea of moral perfection without at the same time being conscious of it as a law for me. Moral perfection depends, at least for the moral consciousness, not on the nature, but on the will – it is a perfection of will, perfect will. I cannot conceive perfect will, the will which is in unison with law, which is itself law, without at the same time regarding it is an object of will, *i. e.*, as an obligation for myself. The conception of the morally perfect being is no merely theoretical, inert conception, but a practical one, calling me to action, to imitation, throwing me into strife, into disunion with myself; for while it proclaims to me what I ought to be, it also tells me to my face, without any flattery, what I am not.[29] And religion renders this disunion all the more painful, all the more terrible, that it sets man's own nature before him as a separate nature, and moreover as a personal being, who hates and curses sinners, and excludes them from his grace, the source of all salvation and happiness.

Now, by what means does man deliver himself from this state of disunion between himself and the perfect being, from the painful consciousness of sin, from the distressing sense of his own nothingness? How does he blunt the fatal sting of sin? Only by this; that he is conscious of *love* as the highest, the absolute power and truth, that he regards the Divine Being not only as a law, as a moral

[29] "That which, in our own judgment, derogates from our self-conceit, humiliates us. Thus the moral law inevitably humiliates every man when he compares with it the sensual tendency of his nature." – Kant, Kritik der prakt. Vernunft, 4th edition, p. 132.

being, as a being of the understanding; but also as a loving, tender, even subjective human being (that is, as having sympathy with individual man).

The understanding judges only according to the stringency of law; the heart accommodates itself, is considerate, lenient, relenting, κατ' ἄνθρωπον. No man is sufficient for the law which moral perfection sets before us; but, for that reason, neither is the law sufficient for man, for the heart. The law condemns; the heart has compassion even on the sinner. The law affirms me only as an abstract being, – love, as a real being. Love gives me the consciousness that I am a man; the law only the consciousness that I am a sinner, that I am worthless.[30] The law holds man in bondage; love makes him free.

Love is the middle term, the substantial bond, the principle of reconciliation between the perfect and the imperfect, the sinless and sinful being, the universal and the individual, the divine and the human. Love is God himself, and apart from it there is no God. Love makes man God and God man. Love strengthens the weak and weakens the strong, abases the high and raises the lowly, idealises matter and materialises spirit. Love is the true unity of God and man, of spirit and nature. In love common nature is spirit, and the pre-eminent spirit is nature. Love is to deny spirit from the point of view of spirit, to deny matter from the point of view of matter. Love is materialism; immaterial love is a chimæra. In the longing of love after the distant object, the abstract idealist involuntarily confirms the truth of sensuousness. But love is also the idealism of nature – love is also spirit, *esprit*. Love alone makes the nightingale a songstress; love alone gives the plant its corolla. And what wonders does not love work in our social life! What faith, creed, opinion separates, love unites. Love even, humorously enough, identifies the high noblesse with the people. What the old mystics said of God, that he is the highest and yet the commonest being, applies in truth to love, and that not a visionary, imaginary love – no! a real love, a love which has flesh and blood, which vibrates as an almighty force through all living.

Yes, it applies only to the love which has flesh and blood, for only this can absolve from the sins which flesh and blood commit. A merely moral being cannot forgive what is contrary to the law of morality. That which denies the law is denied by the law. The moral judge, who does not infuse human blood into his judgment judges the sinner relentlessly, inexorably. Since, then, God is regarded as a sin-pardoning being, he is posited, not indeed as an unmoral, but as more than a moral being – in a word, as a human being. The negation or annulling of sin is the negation of abstract moral rectitude, – the positing of love, mercy, sensuous life. Not abstract beings – no! only sensuous, living beings are merciful. Mercy is the *justice of sensuous life*.[31] Hence God does not forgive the sins of men as the abstract God of the understanding, but as man, as the God made flesh, the visible God. God as man sins not, it is true, but he knows, he takes on himself, the sufferings, the wants, the needs of sensuous beings. The blood of Christ cleanses us from our sins in the eyes of God; it is only his human blood that makes God merciful, allays his anger; that is, our sins are forgiven us because we are no abstract beings, but creatures of flesh and blood.[32]

[30] "Omnes peccavimus… Parricide cum lega cæperunt et illis facinus pœna monstravit." – Seneca. "The law destroys us." – Luther (Th. xvi. s. 320).

[31] "Das Rechtsgefühl der Sinnlichkeit."

[32] "This, my God and Lord, has taken upon him my nature, flesh and blood such as I have, and has been tempted and has suffered in all things like me, but without sin; therefore he can have pity on my weakness. —Hebrews v. Luther (Th. xvi. s. 533). "The deeper we can bring Christ into the flesh the better." – (Ibid. s. 565.) "God himself, when he is dealt with out of Christ, is a terrible God, for no consolation is found in him, but pure anger and disfavour." – (Th. xv. s. 298.)

CHAPTER IV.
THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION; OR, GOD AS LOVE, AS A BEING OF THE HEART

It is the consciousness of love by which man reconciles himself with God, or rather with his own nature as represented in the moral law. The consciousness of the divine love, or what is the same thing, the contemplation of God as human, is the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is nothing else than the practical, material manifestation of the human nature of God. God did not become man for his own sake; the need, the want of man – a want which still exists in the religious sentiment – was the cause of the Incarnation. God became man out of mercy: thus he was in himself already a human God before he became an actual man; for human want, human misery, went to his heart. The Incarnation was a tear of the divine compassion, and hence it was only the visible advent of a Being having human feelings, and therefore essentially human.

If in the Incarnation we stop short at the fact of God becoming man, it certainly appears a surprising, inexplicable, marvellous event. But the incarnate God is only the apparent manifestation of deified man; for the descent of God to man is necessarily preceded by the exaltation of man to God. Man was already in God, was already God himself, before God became man, *i. e.*, showed himself as man.[33] How otherwise could God have become man? The old maxim, *ex nihilo nihil fit,* is applicable here also. A king who has not the welfare of his subjects at heart, who, while seated on his throne, does not mentally live with them in their dwellings, who, in feeling, is not, as the people say, "a common man," such a king will not descend bodily from his throne to make his people happy by his personal presence. Thus, has not the subject risen to be a king before the king descends to be a subject? And if the subject feels himself honoured and made happy by the personal presence of his king, does this feeling refer merely to the bodily presence, and not rather to the manifestation of the disposition, of the philanthropic nature which is the cause of the appearance? But that which in the truth of religion is the cause, takes in the consciousness of religion the form of a consequence; and so here the raising of man to God is made a consequence of the humiliation or descent of God to man. God, says religion, made himself human that he might make man divine.[34]

That which is mysterious and incomprehensible, *i. e.*, contradictory, in the proposition, "God is or becomes a man," arises only from the mingling or confusion of the idea or definitions of the universal, unlimited, metaphysical being with the idea of the religious God, *i. e.*, the conditions of the understanding with the conditions of the heart, the emotive nature; a confusion which is the greatest hindrance to the correct knowledge of religion. But, in fact, the idea of the Incarnation is nothing more than the human *form* of a God, who already in his nature, in the profoundest depths of his soul, is a merciful and therefore a human God.

The form given to this truth in the doctrine of the Church is, that it was not the first person of the Godhead who was incarnate, but the second, who is the representative of man in and before God; the second person being however in reality, as will be shown, the sole, true, first person in religion. And it is only apart from this distinction of persons that the God-man appears mysterious, incomprehensible, "speculative;" for, considered in connection with it, the Incarnation is a necessary, nay, a self-evident

[33] "Such descriptions as those in which the Scriptures speak of God as of a man, and ascribe to him all that is human, are very sweet and comforting – namely, that he talks with us as a friend, and of such things as men are wont to talk of with each other; that he rejoices, sorrows, and suffers, like a man, for the sake of the mystery of the future humanity of Christ." – Luther (Th. ii. p. 334).

[34] "Deus homo factus est, ut homo Deus fieret." – Augustinus (Serm. ad Pop. p. 371, c. 1). In Luther, however (Th. i. p. 334), there is a passage which indicates the true relation. When Moses called man "the image of God, the likeness of God," he meant, says Luther, obscurely to intimate that "God was to become man." Thus here the incarnation of God is clearly enough represented as a consequence of the deification of man.

consequence. The allegation, therefore, that the Incarnation is a purely empirical fact, which could be made known only by means of a revelation in the theological sense, betrays the most crass religious materialism; for the Incarnation is a conclusion which rests on a very comprehensible premiss. But it is equally perverse to attempt to deduce the Incarnation from purely speculative, *i. e.*, metaphysical, abstract grounds; for metaphysics apply only to the first person of the Godhead, who does not become incarnate, who is not a dramatic person. Such a deduction would at the utmost be justifiable if it were meant consciously to deduce from metaphysics the negation of metaphysics.

This example clearly exhibits the distinction between the method of our philosophy and that of the old speculative philosophy. The former does not philosophise concerning the Incarnation, as a peculiar, stupendous mystery, after the manner of speculation dazzled by mystical splendour; on the contrary, it destroys the illusive supposition of a peculiar supernatural mystery; it criticises the dogma and reduces it to its natural elements, immanent in man, to its originating principle and central point – love.

The dogma presents to us two things – God and love. God is love: but what does that mean? Is God something besides love? a being distinct from love? Is it as if I said of an affectionate human being, he is love itself? Certainly; otherwise I must give up the name God, which expresses a special personal being, a subject in distinction from the predicate. Thus love is made something apart. God out of love sent his only-begotten Son. Here love recedes and sinks into insignificance in the dark background – God. It becomes merely a personal, though an essential, attribute; hence it receives both in theory and in feeling, both objectively and subjectively, the rank simply of a predicate, not that of a subject, of the substance; it shrinks out of observation as a collateral, an accident; at one moment it presents itself to me as something essential, at another, it vanishes again. God appears to me in another form besides that of love; in the form of omnipotence, of a severe power not bound by love; a power in which, though in a smaller degree, the devils participate.

So long as love is not exalted into a substance, into an essence, so long there lurks in the background of love a subject who even without love is something by himself, an unloving monster, a diabolical being, whose personality, separable and actually separated from love, delights in the blood of heretics and unbelievers, – the phantom of religious fanaticism. Nevertheless the essential idea of the Incarnation, though enveloped in the night of the religious consciousness, is love. Love determined God to the renunciation of his divinity.[35] Not because of his Godhead as such, according to which he is the *subject* in the proposition, God is love, but because of his love, of the *predicate*, is it that he renounced his Godhead; thus love is a higher power and truth than deity. Love conquers God. It was love to which God sacrificed his divine majesty. And what sort of love was that? another than ours? than that to which we sacrifice life and fortune? Was it the love of himself? of himself as God? No! it was love to man. But is not love to man human love? Can I love man without loving him humanly, without loving him as he himself loves, if he truly loves? Would not love be otherwise a devilish love? The devil too loves man, but not for man's sake – for his own; thus he loves man out of egotism, to aggrandise himself, to extend his power. But God loves man for man's sake, *i. e.*, that he may make him good, happy, blessed. Does he not then love man as the true man loves his fellow? Has love a plural? Is it not everywhere like itself? What then is the true unfalsified import of the Incarnation but absolute, pure love, without adjunct, without a distinction between divine and human love? For though there is also a self-interested love among men, still the true human love, which is alone worthy of this name, is that which impels the sacrifice of self to another. Who then is our Saviour and Redeemer?

[35] It was in this sense that the old uncompromising enthusiastic faith celebrated the Incarnation. "Amor triumphat de Deo," says St. Bernard. And only in the sense of a real self-renunciation, self-negation of the Godhead, lies the reality, the *vis* of the Incarnation; although this self-negation is in itself merely a conception of the imagination, for, looked at in broad daylight, God does not negative himself in the Incarnation, but he shows himself as that which he is, as a human being. The fabrications which modern rationalistic orthodoxy and pietistic rationalism have advanced concerning the Incarnation, in opposition to the rapturous conceptions and expressions of ancient faith, do not deserve to be mentioned, still less controverted.

God or Love? Love; for God as God has not saved us, but Love, which transcends the difference between the divine and human personality. As God has renounced himself out of love, so we, out of love, should renounce God; for if we do not sacrifice God to love, we sacrifice love to God, and, in spite of the predicate of love, we have the God – the evil being – of religious fanaticism.

While, however, we have laid open this nucleus of truth in the Incarnation, we have at the same time exhibited the dogma in its falsity; we have reduced the apparently supernatural and super-rational mystery to a simple truth inherent in human nature: – a truth which does not belong to the Christian religion alone, but which, implicitly at least, belongs more or less to every religion as such. For every religion which has any claim to the name presupposes that God is not indifferent to the beings who worship him, that therefore what is human is not alien to him, that, as an object of human veneration, he is a human God. Every prayer discloses the secret of the Incarnation, every prayer is in fact an incarnation of God. In prayer I involve God in human distress, I make him a participator in my sorrows and wants. God is not deaf to my complaints; he has compassion on me; hence he renounces his divine majesty, his exaltation above all that is finite and human; he becomes a man with man; for if he listens to me, and pities me, he is affected by my sufferings. God loves man —*i. e.*, God suffers from man. Love does not exist without sympathy, sympathy does not exist without suffering in common. Have I any sympathy for a being without feeling? No! I feel only for that which has feeling, only for that which partakes of my nature, for that in which I feel myself, whose sufferings I myself suffer. Sympathy presupposes a like nature. The Incarnation, Providence, prayer, are the expression of this identity of nature in God and man.[36]

It is true that theology, which is pre-occupied with the metaphysical attributes of eternity, unconditionedness, unchangeableness, and the like abstractions, which express the nature of the understanding, – theology denies the possibility that God should suffer, but in so doing it denies the truth of religion.[37] For religion – the religious man in the act of devotion believes in a real sympathy of the divine being in his sufferings and wants, believes that the will of God can be determined by the fervour of prayer, *i. e.*, by the force of feeling, believes in a real, present fulfilment of his desire, wrought by prayer. The truly religious man unhesitatingly assigns his own feelings to God; God is to him a heart susceptible to all that is human. The heart can betake itself only to the heart; feeling can appeal only to feeling; it finds consolation in itself, in its own nature alone.

The notion that the fulfilment of prayer has been determined from eternity, that it was originally included in the plan of creation, is the empty, absurd fiction of a mechanical mode of thought, which is in absolute contradiction with the nature of religion. “We need,” says Lavater somewhere, and quite correctly according to the religious sentiment, “an arbitrary God.” Besides, even according to this fiction, God is just as much a being determined by man, as in the real, present fulfilment consequent on the power of prayer; the only difference is, that the contradiction with the unchangeableness and unconditionedness of God – that which constitutes the difficulty – is thrown back into the deceptive distance of the past or of eternity. Whether God decides on the fulfilment of my prayer now, on the immediate occasion of my offering it, or whether he did decide on it long ago, is fundamentally the same thing.

It is the greatest inconsequence to reject the idea of a God who can be determined by prayer, that is, by the force of feeling, as an unworthy anthropomorphic idea. If we once believe in a being who is an object of veneration, an object of prayer, an object of affection, who is providential, who takes care of man, – in a Providence, which is not conceivable without love, – in a being, therefore,

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[36] “Nos scimus affici Deum misericordia nostri et non solum respicere lacrymas nostras, sed etiam numerare stillulas, sicut scriptum in Psalmo LVI. Filius Dei vere afficitur sensu miseriarum nostrarum.” – Melancthonis et aliorum (Declam. Th. iii. p. 286, p. 450).

[37] St. Bernard resorts to a charmingly sophistical play of words: – ”*Impassibilis* est Deus, sed non *incompassibilis*, cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere.” – (Sup. Cant. Sermo 26.) As if compassion were not suffering – the suffering of love, it is true, the suffering of the heart. But what does suffer if not thy sympathising heart? No love, no suffering. The material, the source of suffering, is the universal heart, the common bond of all beings.

who is loving, whose motive of action is love; we also believe in a being, who has, if not an anatomical, yet a psychical human heart. The religious mind, as has been said, places everything in God, excepting that alone which it despises. The Christians certainly gave their God no attributes which contradicted their own moral ideas, but they gave him without hesitation, and of necessity, the emotions of love, of compassion. And the love which the religious mind places in God is not an illusory, imaginary love, but a real, true love. God is loved and loves again; the divine love is only human love made objective, affirming itself. In God love is absorbed in itself as its own ultimate truth.

It may be objected to the import here assigned to the Incarnation, that the Christian Incarnation is altogether peculiar, that at least it is different (which is quite true in certain respects, as will hereafter be apparent) from the incarnations of the heathen deities, whether Greek or Indian. These latter are mere products of men or deified men; but in Christianity is given the idea of the true God; here the union of the divine nature with the human is first significant and "speculative." Jupiter transforms himself into a bull; the heathen incarnations are mere fancies. In paganism there is no more in the nature of God than in his incarnate manifestation; in Christianity, on the contrary, it is God, a separate, superhuman being, who appears as man. But this objection is refuted by the remark already made, that even the premiss of the Christian Incarnation contains the human nature. God loves man; moreover God has a Son; God is a father; the relations of humanity are not excluded from God; the human is not remote from God, not unknown to him. Thus here also there is nothing more in the nature of God than in the incarnate manifestation of God. In the Incarnation religion only confesses, what in reflection on itself, as theology, it will not admit; namely, that God is an altogether human being. The Incarnation, the mystery of the "God-man," is therefore no mysterious composition of contraries, no synthetic fact, as it is regarded by the speculative religious philosophy, which has a particular delight in contradiction; it is an analytic fact, – a human word with a human meaning. If there be a contradiction here, it lies before the incarnation and out of it; in the union of providence, of love, with deity; for if this love is a real love, it is not essentially different from our love, – there are only our limitations to be abstracted from it; and thus the Incarnation is only the strongest, deepest, most palpable, open-hearted expression of this providence, this love. Love knows not how to make its object happier than by rejoicing it with its personal presence, by letting itself be seen. To see the invisible benefactor face to face is the most ardent desire of love. To see is a divine act. Happiness lies in the mere sight of the beloved one. The glance is the certainty of love. And the Incarnation has no other significance, no other effect, than the indubitable certitude of the love of God to man. Love remains, but the Incarnation upon the earth passes away: the appearance was limited by time and place, accessible to few; but the essence, the nature which was manifested, is eternal and universal. We can no longer believe in the manifestation for its own sake, but only for the sake of the thing manifested; for to us there remains no immediate presence but that of love.

The clearest, most irrefragable proof that man in religion contemplates himself as the object of the Divine Being, as the end of the divine activity, that thus in religion he has relation only to his own nature, only to himself, – the clearest, most irrefragable proof of this is the love of God to man, the basis and central point of religion. God, for the sake of man, empties himself of his Godhead, lays aside his Godhead. Herein lies the elevating influence of the Incarnation; the highest, the perfect being humiliates, lowers himself for the sake of man. Hence in God I learn to estimate my own nature; I have value in the sight of God; the divine significance of my nature is become evident to me. How can the worth of man be more strongly expressed than when God, for man's sake, becomes a man, when man is the end, the object of the divine love? The love of God to man is an essential condition of the Divine Being: God is a God who loves me – who loves man in general. Here lies the emphasis, the fundamental feeling of religion. The love of God makes me loving; the love of God to man is the cause of man's love to God; the divine love causes, awakens human love. "We love God because he first loved us." What, then, is it that I love in God? Love: love to man. But when I love and worship the love with which God loves man, do I not love man; is not my love of God, though indirectly, love

of man? If God loves man, is not man, then, the very substance of God? That which I love, is it not my inmost being? Have I a heart when I do not love? No! love only is the heart of man. But what is love without the thing loved? Thus what I love is my heart, the substance of my being, my nature. Why does man grieve, why does he lose pleasure in life when he has lost the beloved object? Why? because with the beloved object he has lost his heart, the activity of his affections, the principle of life. Thus if God loves man, man is the heart of God – the welfare of man his deepest anxiety. If man, then, is the object of God, is not man, in God, an object to himself? is not the content of the divine nature the human nature? If God is love, is not the essential content of this love man? Is not the love of God to man – the basis and central point of religion – the love of man to himself made an object, contemplated as the highest objective truth, as the highest being to man? Is not then the proposition, "God loves man" an orientalism (religion is essentially oriental), which in plain speech means, the highest is the love of man?

The truth to which, by means of analysis, we have here reduced the mystery of the Incarnation, has also been recognised even in the religious consciousness. Thus Luther, for example, says, "He who can truly conceive such a thing (namely, the incarnation of God) in his heart, should, for the sake of the flesh and blood which sits at the right hand of God, bear love to all flesh and blood here upon the earth, and never more be able to be angry with any man. The gentle manhood of Christ our God should at a glance fill all hearts with joy, so that never more could an angry, unfriendly thought come therein – yea, every man ought, out of great joy, to be tender to his fellow-man for the sake of that our flesh and blood." "This is a fact which should move us to great joy and blissful hope that we are thus honoured above all creatures, even above the angels, so that we can with truth boast, My own flesh and blood sits at the right hand of God and reigns over all. Such honour has no creature, not even an angel. This ought to be a furnace that should melt us all into one heart, and should create such a fervour in us men that we should heartily love each other." But that which in the truth of religion is the essence of the fable, the chief thing, is to the religious consciousness only the moral of the fable, a collateral thing.

CHAPTER V.
THE MYSTERY OF THE SUFFERING GOD

An essential condition of the incarnate, or, what is the same thing, the human God, namely, Christ, is the Passion. Love attests itself by suffering. All thoughts and feelings which are immediately associated with Christ concentrate themselves in the idea of the Passion. God as God is the sum of all human perfection; God as Christ is the sum of all human misery. The heathen philosophers celebrated activity, especially the spontaneous activity of the intelligence, as the highest, the divine; the Christians consecrated passivity, even placing it in God. If God as *actus purus*, as pure activity, is the God of abstract philosophy; so, on the other hand, Christ, the God of the Christians, is the *passio pura*, pure suffering – the highest metaphysical thought, the *être suprême* of the heart. For what makes more impression on the heart than suffering? especially the suffering of one who considered in himself is free from suffering, exalted above it; – the suffering of the innocent, endured purely for the good of others, the suffering of love, – self-sacrifice? But for the very reason that the history of the Passion is the history which most deeply affects the human heart, or let us rather say the heart in general – for it would be a ludicrous mistake in man to attempt to conceive any other heart than the human, – it follows undeniably that nothing else is expressed in that history, nothing else is made an object in it, but the nature of the heart, – that it is not an invention of the understanding or the poetic faculty, but of the heart. The heart, however, does not invent in the same way as the free imagination or intelligence; it has a passive, receptive relation to what it produces; all that proceeds from it seems to it given from without, takes it by violence, works with the force of irresistible necessity. The heart overcomes, masters man; he who is once in its power is possessed as it were by his demon, by his God. The heart knows no other God, no more excellent being than itself, than a God whose name may indeed be another, but whose nature, whose substance is the nature of the heart. And out of the heart, out of the inward impulse to do good, to live and die for man, out of the divine instinct of benevolence which desires to make all happy, and excludes none, not even the most abandoned and abject, out of the moral duty of benevolence in the highest sense, as having become an inward necessity, *i. e.*, a movement of the heart, – out of the human nature, therefore, as it reveals itself through the heart, has sprung what is best, what is true in Christianity – its essence purified from theological dogmas and contradictions.

For, according to the principles which we have already developed, that which in religion is the predicate we must make the subject, and that which in religion is a subject we must make a predicate, thus inverting the oracles of religion; and by this means we arrive at the truth. God suffers – suffering is the predicate – but for men, for others, not for himself. What does that mean in plain speech? Nothing else than this: to suffer for others is divine; he who suffers for others, who lays down his life for them, acts divinely, is a God to men.[38]

The Passion of Christ, however, represents not only moral, voluntary suffering, the suffering of love, the power of sacrificing self for the good of others; it represents also suffering as such, suffering in so far as it is an expression of passibility in general. The Christian religion is so little superhuman that it even sanctions human weakness. The heathen philosopher, on hearing tidings of the death of his child exclaims: "I knew that he was mortal." Christ, on the contrary, – at least in the Bible, – sheds tears over the death of Lazarus, a death which he nevertheless knew to be only

[38] Religion speaks by example. Example is the law of religion. What Christ did is law. Christ suffered for others; therefore, we should do likewise. "Quæ necessitas fuit ut sic exinaniret se, sic humiliaret se, sic abbreviaret se Dominus majestatis; nisi ut vos similiter faciatis?" – Bernardus (in Die nat. Domini). "We ought studiously to consider the example of Christ… That would move us and incite us, so that we from our hearts should willingly help and serve other people, even though it might be hard, and we must suffer on account of it." – Luther (Th. xv. p. 40).

an apparent one. While Socrates empties the cup of poison with unshaken soul, Christ exclaims, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."[39] Christ is in this respect the self-confession of human sensibility. In opposition to the heathen, and in particular the stoical principle, with its rigorous energy of will and self-sustainedness, the Christian involves the consciousness of his own sensitiveness and susceptibility in the consciousness of God; he finds it, if only it be no sinful weakness, not denied, not condemned in God.

To suffer is the highest command of Christianity – the history of Christianity is the history of the Passion of Humanity. While amongst the heathens the shout of sensual pleasure mingled itself in the worship of the gods, amongst the Christians, we mean of course the ancient Christians, God is served with sighs and tears.[40] But as where sounds of sensual pleasure make a part of the cultus, it is a sensual God, a God of life, who is worshipped, as indeed these shouts of joy are only a symbolical definition of the nature of the gods to whom this jubilation is acceptable; so also the sighs of Christians are tones which proceed from the inmost soul, the inmost nature of their God. The God expressed by the cultus, whether this be an external, or, as with the Christians, an inward spiritual worship, – not the God of sophistical theology, – is the true God of man. But the Christians, we mean of course the ancient Christians, believed that they rendered the highest honour to their God by tears, the tears of repentance and yearning. Thus tears are the light-reflecting drops which mirror the nature of the Christian's God. But a God who has pleasure in tears, expresses nothing else than the nature of the heart. It is true that the theory of the Christian religion says: Christ has done all for us, has redeemed us, has reconciled us with God; and from hence the inference may be drawn: Let us be of a joyful mind and disposition; what need have we to trouble ourselves as to how we shall reconcile ourselves with God? we are reconciled already. But the imperfect tense in which the fact of suffering is expressed makes a deeper, a more enduring impression, than the perfect tense which expresses the fact of redemption. The redemption is only the result of the suffering; the suffering is the cause of the redemption. Hence the suffering takes deeper root in the feelings; the suffering makes itself an object of imitation; – not so the redemption. If God himself suffered for my sake, how can I be joyful, how can I allow myself any gladness, at least on this corrupt earth, which was the theatre of his suffering?[41] Ought I to fare better than God? Ought I not, then, to make his sufferings my own? Is not what God my Lord does my model? Or shall I share only the gain and not the cost also? Do I know merely that he has redeemed me? Do I not also know the history of his suffering? Should it be an object of cold remembrance to me, or even an object of rejoicing, because it has purchased my salvation? Who can think so – who can wish to be exempt from the sufferings of his God?

The Christian religion is the religion of suffering.[42] The images of the crucified one which we still meet with in all churches, represent not the Saviour, but only the crucified, the suffering Christ. Even the self-crucifixions among the Christians are, psychologically, a deep-rooted consequence of their religious views. How should not he who has always the image of the crucified one in his mind, at length contract the desire to crucify either himself or another? At least we have as good a warrant for this conclusion as Augustine and other fathers of the Church for their reproach against the heathen religion, that the licentious religious images of the heathens provoked and authorised licentiousness.

God suffers, means in truth nothing else than: God is a heart. The heart is the source, the centre of all suffering. A being without suffering is a being without a heart. The mystery of the suffering

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[39] "Hærent plerique hoc loco. Ego autem non solum excusandum non puto, sed etiam nusquam magis pietatem ejus majestatemque demiror. Minus enim contulerat mihi, nisi meum suscepisset affectum. Ergo pro me doluit, qui pro se nihil habuit, quod doleret." – Ambrosius (Exposit. in Lucæ Ev. l. x. c. 22).

[40] "Quando enim illi (Deo) appropinquare auderemus in sua impassibilitate manenti?" – Bernardus (Tract. de xii. Grad. Humil. et Superb.).

[41] "Deus meus pendet in patibulo et ego voluptati operam dabo?" – (Form. Hon. Vitæ. Among the spurious writings of St. Bernard.) "Memoria crucifixi crucifigat in te carnem tuam." – Joh. Gerhard (Medit. Sacræ, M. 37).

[42] "It is better to suffer evil than to do good." – Luther (Th. iv. s. 15).

God is therefore the mystery of feeling, sensibility. A suffering God is a feeling, sensitive God.[43] But the proposition: God is a feeling Being, is only the religious periphrase of the proposition: feeling is absolute, divine in its nature.

Man has the consciousness not only of a spring of activity, but also of a spring of suffering in himself. I feel; and I feel feeling (not merely will and thought, which are only too often in opposition to me and my feelings), as belonging to my essential being, and, though the source of all sufferings and sorrows, as a glorious, divine power and perfection. What would man be without feeling? It is the musical power in man. But what would man be without music? Just as man has a musical faculty and feels an inward necessity to breathe out his feelings in song; so, by a like necessity, he in religious sighs and tears streams forth the nature of feeling as an objective, divine nature.

Religion is human nature reflected, mirrored in itself. That which exists has necessarily a pleasure, a joy in itself, loves itself, and loves itself justly; to blame it because it loves itself is to reproach it because it exists. To exist is to assert oneself, to affirm oneself, to love oneself; he to whom life is a burthen rids himself of it. Where, therefore, feeling is not depreciated and repressed, as with the Stoics, where existence is awarded to it, there also is religious power and significance already conceded to it, there also is it already exalted to that stage in which it can mirror and reflect itself, in which it can project its own image as God. God is the mirror of man.

That which has essential value for man, which he esteems the perfect, the excellent, in which he has true delight, – that alone is God to him. If feeling seems to thee a glorious attribute, it is then, *per se*, a divine attribute to thee. Therefore, the feeling, sensitive man believes only in a feeling, sensitive God, *i. e.*, he believes only in the truth of his own existence and nature, for he can believe in nothing else than that which is involved in his own nature. His faith is the consciousness of that which is holy to him; but that alone is holy to man which lies deepest within him, which is most peculiarly his own, the basis, the essence of his individuality. To the feeling man a God without feeling is an empty, abstract, negative God, *i. e.*, nothing; because that is wanting to him which is precious and sacred to man. God is for man the commonplace book where he registers his highest feelings and thoughts, the genealogical tree on which are entered the names that are dearest and most sacred to him.

It is a sign of an undiscriminating good-nature, a womanish instinct, to gather together and then to preserve tenaciously all that we have gathered, not to trust anything to the waves of forgetfulness, to the chance of memory, in short not to trust ourselves and learn to know what really has value for us. The freethinker is liable to the danger of an unregulated, dissolute life. The religious man who binds together all things in one, does not lose himself in sensuality; but for that reason he is exposed to the danger of illiberality, of spiritual selfishness and greed. Therefore, to the religious man at least, the irreligious or un-religious man appears lawless, arbitrary, haughty, frivolous; not because that which is sacred to the former is not also in itself sacred to the latter, but only because that which the un-religious man holds in his head merely, the religious man places out of and above himself as an object, and hence recognises in himself the relation of a formal subordination. The religious man having a commonplace book, a nucleus of aggregation, has an aim, and having an aim he has firm standing-ground. Not mere will as such, not vague knowledge – only activity with a purpose, which is the union of theoretic and practical activity, gives man a moral basis and support, *i. e.*, character. Every man, therefore, must place before himself a God, *i. e.*, an aim, a purpose. The aim is the conscious, voluntary, essential impulse of life, the glance of genius, the focus of self-knowledge, – the unity of the material and spiritual in the individual man. He who has an aim has a law over him; he does not merely guide himself; he is guided. He who has no aim, has no home, no sanctuary; aimlessness is the greatest unhappiness. Even he who has only common aims gets on better, though he may not be better, than he who has no aim. An aim sets limits; but limits are the mentors of virtue. He who has

[43] "Pati voluit, ut compati disceret, miser fieri, ut misereri disceret." – Bernhard (de Grad.). "Miserere nostri, quoniam carnis imbecillitatem, tu ipse eam passus, expertus es." – Clemens Alex. Pædag. l. i. c. 8.

an aim, an aim which is in itself true and essential, has, *eo ipso*, a religion, if not in the narrow sense of common pietism, yet – and this is the only point to be considered – in the sense of reason, in the sense of the universal, the only true love.

CHAPTER VI.
THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY AND THE MOTHER OF GOD

If a God without feeling, without a capability of suffering, will not suffice to man as a feeling, suffering being, neither will a God with feeling only, a God without intelligence and will. Only a being who comprises in himself the whole man can satisfy the whole man. Man's consciousness of himself in his totality is the consciousness of the Trinity. The Trinity knits together the qualities or powers which were before regarded separately into unity, and thereby reduces the universal being of the understanding, *i. e.*, God as God, to a special being, a special faculty.

That which theology designates as the image, the similitude of the Trinity, we must take as the thing itself, the essence, the archetype, the original; by this means we shall solve the enigma. The so-called images by which it has been sought to illustrate the Trinity, and make it comprehensible, are principally: mind, understanding, memory, will, love —*mens*, *intellectus*, *memoria*, *voluntas*, *amor* or *caritas*.

God thinks, God loves; and, moreover, he thinks, he loves himself; the object thought, known, loved, is God himself. The objectivity of self-consciousness is the first thing we meet with in the Trinity. Self-consciousness necessarily urges itself upon man as something absolute. Existence is for him one with self-consciousness; existence with self-consciousness is for him existence simply. If I do not know that I exist, it is all one whether I exist or not. Self-consciousness is for man – is, in fact, in itself – absolute. A God who knows not his own existence, a God without consciousness, is no God. Man cannot conceive himself as without consciousness; hence he cannot conceive God as without it. The divine self-consciousness is nothing else than the consciousness of consciousness as an absolute or divine essence.

But this explanation is by no means exhaustive. On the contrary, we should be proceeding very arbitrarily if we sought to reduce and limit the mystery of the Trinity to the proposition just laid down. Consciousness, understanding, will, love, in the sense of abstract essences or qualities, belong only to abstract philosophy. But religion is man's consciousness of himself in his concrete or living totality, in which the identity of self-consciousness exists only as the pregnant, complete unity of *I* and *thou*.

Religion, at least the Christian, is abstraction from the world; it is essentially inward. The religious man leads a life withdrawn from the world, hidden in God, still, void of worldly joy. He separates himself from the world, not only in the ordinary sense, according to which the renunciation of the world belongs to every true, earnest man, but also in that wider sense which science gives to the word, when it calls itself world-wisdom (*welt-weisheit*); but he thus separates himself only because God is a being separate from the world, an extra and supramundane being, —*i. e.*, abstractly and philosophically expressed, the non-existence of the world. God, as an extramundane being, is however nothing else than the nature of man withdrawn from the world and concentrated in itself, freed from all worldly ties and entanglements, transporting itself above the world, and positing itself in this condition as a real objective being; or, nothing else than the consciousness of the power to abstract oneself from all that is external, and to live for and with oneself alone, under the form which this power takes in religion, namely, that of a being distinct, apart from man.[44] God as God, as a simple being, is the being absolutely alone, solitary – absolute solitude and self-sufficingness; for

[44] "Dei essentia est extra omnes creaturas, sicut ab æterno fuit Deus in se ipso; ab omnibus ergo creaturis amorem tuum abstrahas." – John Gerhard (Medit. Sacræ, M. 31). "If thou wouldst have the Creator, thou must do without the creature. The less of the creature, the more of God. Therefore, abjure all creatures, with all their consolations." – J. Tauler (Postilla. Hamburg, 1621, p. 312). "If a man cannot say in his heart with truth: God and I are alone in the world – there is nothing else, – he has no peace in himself." – G. Arnold (Von Verschmähung der Welt. Wahre Abbild der Ersten Christen, L. 4, c. 2, § 7).

that only can be solitary which is self-sufficing. To be able to be solitary is a sign of character and thinking power. Solitude is the want of the thinker, society the want of the heart. We can think alone, but we can love only with another. In love we are dependent, for it is the need of another being; we are independent only in the solitary act of thought. Solitude is self-sufficingness.

But from a solitary God the essential need of duality, of love, of community, of the real, completed self-consciousness, of the *alter ego*, is excluded. This want is therefore satisfied by religion thus: in the still solitude of the Divine Being is placed another, a second, different from God as to personality, but identical with him in essence, – God the Son, in distinction from God the Father. God the Father is *I*, God the Son *Thou*. The *I* is understanding, the *Thou* love. But love with understanding and understanding with love is mind, and mind is the totality of man as such – the total man.

Participated life is alone true, self-satisfying, divine life: – this simple thought, this truth, natural, immanent in man, is the secret, the supernatural mystery of the Trinity. But religion expresses this truth, as it does every other, in an indirect manner, *i. e.*, inversely, for it here makes a general truth into a particular one, the true subject into a predicate, when it says: God is a participated life, a life of love and friendship. The third Person in the Trinity expresses nothing further than the love of the two divine Persons towards each other; it is the unity of the Son and the Father, the idea of community, strangely enough regarded in its turn as a special personal being.

The Holy Spirit owes its personal existence only to a name, a word. The earliest Fathers of the Church are well known to have identified the Spirit with the Son. Even later, its dogmatic personality wants consistency. He is the love with which God loves himself and man, and, on the other hand, he is the love with which man loves God and men. Thus he is the identity of God and man, made objective according to the usual mode of thought in religion, namely, as in itself a distinct being. But for us this unity or identity is already involved in the idea of the Father, and yet more in that of the Son. Hence we need not make the Holy Spirit a separate object of our analysis. Only this one remark further. In so far as the Holy Spirit represents the subjective phase, he is properly the representation of the religious sentiment to itself, the representation of religious emotion, of religious enthusiasm, or the personification, the rendering objective of religion in religion. The Holy Spirit is therefore the sighing creature, the yearning of the creature after God.

But that there are in fact only two Persons in the Trinity, the third representing, as has been said, only love, is involved in this, that to the strict idea of love two suffice. With two we have the principle of multiplicity and all its essential results. Two is the principle of multiplicity, and can therefore stand as its complete substitute. If several Persons were posited, the force of love would only be weakened – it would be dispersed. But love and the heart are identical; the heart is no special power; it is the man who loves, and in so far as he loves. The second Person is therefore the self-assertion of the human heart as the principle of duality, of participated life, – it is warmth; the Father is light, although light was chiefly a predicate of the Son, because in him the Godhead first became clear, comprehensible. But notwithstanding this, light as a superterrestrial element may be ascribed to the Father, the representative of the Godhead as such, the cold being of the intelligence; and warmth, as a terrestrial element, to the Son. God as the Son first gives warmth to man; here God, from an object of the intellectual eye, of the indifferent sense of light, becomes an object of feeling, of affection, of enthusiasm, of rapture; but only because the Son is himself nothing else than the glow of love, enthusiasm.[45] God as the Son is the primitive incarnation, the primitive self-renunciation of God, the negation of God in God; for as the Son he is a finite being, because he exists *ab alio*, he has a source, whereas the Father has no source, he exists *à se*. Thus in the second Person the essential attribute of the Godhead, the attribute of self-existence, is given up. But God the Father himself begets the Son; thus he renounces his rigorous, exclusive divinity; he humiliates, lowers himself, evolves within

[45] "Exigit ergo Deus timeri ut Dominus, honorari ut pater, ut sponsus amari. Quid in his præstat, quid eminet? – Amor." Bernardus (Sup. Cant. Serm. 83).

himself the principle of finiteness, of dependent existence; in the Son he becomes man, not indeed, in the first instance, as to the outward form, but as to the inward nature. And for this reason it is as the Son that God first becomes the object of man, the object of feeling, of the heart.

The heart comprehends only what springs from the heart. From the character of the subjective disposition and impressions the conclusion is infallible as to the character of the object. The pure, free understanding denies the Son, – not so the understanding determined by feeling, overshadowed by the heart; on the contrary, it finds in the Son the depths of the Godhead, because in him it finds feeling, which in and by itself is something dark, obscure, and therefore appears to man a mystery. The Son lays hold on the heart, because the *true* Father of the Divine Son is the human heart,[46] and the Son himself nothing else than the divine heart, *i. e.*, the human heart become objective to itself as a Divine Being.

A God who has not in himself the quality of finiteness, the principle of concrete existence, the essence of the feeling of dependence, is no God for a finite, concrete being. The religious man cannot love a God who has not the essence of love in himself, neither can man, or, in general, any finite being, be an object to a God who has not in himself the ground, the principle of finiteness. To such a God there is wanting the sense, the understanding, the sympathy for finiteness. How can God be the Father of men, how can he love other beings subordinate to himself, if he has not in himself a subordinate being, a Son, if he does not know what love is, so to speak, from his own experience, in relation to himself? The single man takes far less interest in the family sorrows of another than he who himself has family ties. Thus God the Father loves men only in the Son and for the sake of the Son. The love to man is derived from the love to the Son.

The Father and Son in the Trinity are therefore father and son not in a figurative sense, but in a strictly literal sense. The Father is a real father in relation to the Son, the Son is a real son in relation to the Father, or to God as the Father. The essential personal distinction between them consists only in this, that the one begets, the other is begotten. If this natural empirical condition is taken away, their personal existence and reality are annihilated. The Christians – we mean of course the Christians of former days, who would with difficulty recognise the worldly, frivolous, pagan Christians of the modern world as their brethren in Christ – substituted for the natural love and unity immanent in man a purely religious love and unity; they rejected the real life of the family, the intimate bond of love which is naturally moral, as an undivine, unheavenly, *i. e.*, in truth, a worthless thing. But in compensation they had a Father and Son in God, who embraced each other with heartfelt love, with that intense love which natural relationship alone inspires. On this account the mystery of the Trinity was to the ancient Christians an object of unbounded wonder, enthusiasm, and rapture, because here the satisfaction of those profoundest human wants which in reality, in life, they denied, became to them an object of contemplation in God.[47]

It was therefore quite in order that, to complete the divine family, the bond of love between Father and Son, a third, and that a feminine person, was received into heaven; for the personality of the Holy Spirit is a too vague and precarious, a too obviously poetic personification of the mutual love of the Father and Son, to serve as the third complementary being. It is true that the Virgin Mary was not so placed between the Father and Son as to imply that the Father had begotten the Son through her, because the sexual relation was regarded by the Christians as something unholy and sinful; but it is enough that the maternal principle was associated with the Father and Son.

It is, in fact, difficult to perceive why the Mother should be something unholy, *i. e.*, unworthy of God, when once God is Father and Son. Though it is held that the Father is not a father in the natural sense – that, on the contrary, the divine generation is quite different from the natural and

[46] Just as the *feminine* spirit of Catholicism – in distinction from Protestantism, whose principle is the masculine God, the masculine spirit – is the *Mother* of God.

[47] "Dum Patris et Filii proprietates communionemque delectabilem intueor, nihil delectabilius in illis invenio, quam mutuum amoris affectum." – Anselmus (in Rixner's Gesch. d. Phil. II. B. Anh. p. 18).

human – still he remains a Father, and a real, not a nominal or symbolical Father in relation to the Son. And the idea of the Mother of God, which now appears so strange to us, is therefore not really more strange or paradoxical, than the idea of the Son of God, is not more in contradiction with the general, abstract definition of God than the Sonship. On the contrary, the Virgin Mary fits in perfectly with the relations of the Trinity, since she conceives without man the Son whom the Father begets without woman;[48] so that thus the Holy Virgin is a necessary, inherently requisite antithesis to the Father in the bosom of the Trinity. Moreover we have, if not *in concreto* and explicitly, yet *in abstracto* and implicitly, the feminine principle already in the Son. The Son is the mild, gentle, forgiving, conciliating being – the womanly sentiment of God. God, as the Father, is the generator, the active, the principle of masculine spontaneity; but the Son is begotten without himself begetting, *Deus genitus*, the passive, suffering, receptive being; he receives his existence from the Father. The Son, as a son, of course not as God, is dependent on the Father, subject to his authority. The Son is thus the feminine feeling of dependence in the Godhead; the Son implicitly urges upon us the need of a real feminine being.[49]

The son – I mean the natural, human son – considered as such, is an intermediate being between the masculine nature of the father and the feminine nature of the mother; he is, as it were, still half a man, half a woman, inasmuch as he has not the full, rigorous consciousness of independence which characterises the man, and feels himself drawn rather to the mother than to the father. The love of the son to the mother is the first love of the masculine being for the feminine. The love of man to woman, the love of the youth for the maiden, receives its religious – its sole truly religious consecration in the love of the son to the mother; the son's love for his mother is the first yearning of man towards woman – his first humbling of himself before her.

Necessarily, therefore, the idea of the Mother of God is associated with the idea of the Son of God, – the same heart that needed the one needed the other also. Where the Son is, the Mother cannot be absent; the Son is the only-begotten of the Father, but the Mother is the concomitant of the Son. The Son is a substitute for the Mother to the Father, but not so the Father to the Son. To the Son the Mother is indispensable; the heart of the Son is the heart of the Mother. Why did God become man only through woman? Could not the Almighty have appeared as a man amongst men in another manner – immediately? Why did the Son betake himself to the bosom of the Mother?7 For what other reason than because the Son is the yearning after the Mother, because his womanly, tender heart found a corresponding expression only in a feminine body? It is true that the Son, as a natural man, dwells only temporarily in the shrine of this body, but the impressions which he here receives are inextinguishable; the Mother is never out of the mind and heart of the Son. If then the worship of the Son of God is no idolatry, the worship of the Mother of God is no idolatry. If herein we perceive the love of God to us, that he gave us his only-begotten Son, *i. e.*, that which was dearest to him, for our salvation, – we can perceive this love still better when we find in God the beating of a mother's heart. The highest and deepest love is the mother's love. The father consoles himself for the loss of his son; he has a stoical principle within him. The mother, on the contrary, is inconsolable; she is the sorrowing element, that which cannot be indemnified – the true in love.

Where faith in the Mother of God sinks, there also sinks faith in the Son of God, and in God as the Father. The Father is a truth only where the Mother is a truth. Love is in and by itself essentially feminine in its nature. The belief in the love of God is the belief in the feminine principle as divine.7

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[48] "Natus est de Patre semper et matre semel; de Patre sine sexu, de matre sine usu. Apud patrem quippe defuit concipientis uterus; apud matrem defuit seminantis amplexus." – Augustinus (Serm. ad Pop. p. 372, c. 1, ed. Bened. Antw. 1701).

[49] In Jewish mysticism, God, according to one school, is a masculine, the Holy Spirit a feminine principle, out of whose intermixture arose the Son, and with him the world. Gfrörer, Jahrb. d. H. i. Abth. pp. 332–334. The Herrnhuters also called the Holy Spirit the mother of the Saviour. 7 "For it could not have been difficult or impossible to God to bring his Son into the world without a mother; but it was his will to use the woman for that end." – Luther (Th. ii. p. 348). ↥

Love apart from living nature is an anomaly, a phantom. Behold in love the holy necessity and depth of Nature!

Protestantism has set aside the Mother of God; but this deposition of woman has been severely avenged.[50] The arms which it has used against the Mother of God have turned against itself, against the Son of God, against the whole Trinity. He who has once offered up the Mother of God to the understanding, is not far from sacrificing the mystery of the Son of God as an anthropomorphism. The anthropomorphism is certainly veiled when the feminine being is excluded, but only veiled – not removed. It is true that Protestantism had no need of the heavenly bride, because it received with open arms the earthly bride. But for that very reason it ought to have been consequent and courageous enough to give up not only the Mother, but the Son and the Father. Only he who has no earthly parents needs heavenly ones. The triune God is the God of Catholicism; he has a profound, heartfelt, necessary, truly religious significance, only in antithesis to the negation of all substantial bonds, in antithesis to the life of the anchorite, the monk, and the nun.[51] The triune God has a substantial meaning only where there is an abstraction from the substance of real life. The more empty life is, the fuller, the more concrete is God. The impoverishing of the real world and the enriching of God is one act. Only the poor man has a rich God. God springs out of the feeling of a want; what man is in need of, whether this be a definite and therefore conscious, or an unconscious need, – that is God. Thus the disconsolate feeling of a void, of loneliness, needed a God in whom there is society, a union of beings fervently loving each other.

Here we have the true explanation of the fact that the Trinity has in modern times lost first its practical, and ultimately its theoretical significance.

[50] In the Concordienbuch, Erklär. Art. 8, and in the Apol. of the Augsburg Confession, Mary is nevertheless still called the "Blessed Virgin, who was truly the Mother of God, and yet remained a virgin," – "worthy of all honour."

[51] "Sit monachus quasi Melchisedec sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia: neque patrem sibi vocet super terram. Imo sic existimet, quasi ipse sit solus et Deus. (Specul. Monach. Pseudo-Bernard.) Melchisedec … refertur ad exemplum, ut tanquam sine patre et sine matre sacerdos esse debeat." – Ambrosius.

CHAPTER VII.
THE MYSTERY OF THE LOGOS AND DIVINE IMAGE

The essential significance of the Trinity is, however, concentrated in the idea of the second Person. The warm interest of Christians in the Trinity has been, in the main, only an interest in the Son of God.[52] The fierce contention concerning the *Homousios* and *Homoiousios* was not an empty one, although it turned upon a letter. The point in question was the co-equality and divine dignity of the second Person, and therefore the honour of the Christian religion itself; for its essential, characteristic object is the second Person; and that which is essentially the object of a religion is truly, essentially its God. The real God of any religion is the so-called Mediator, because he alone is the immediate object of religion. He who, instead of applying to God, applies to a saint, does so only on the assumption that the saint has all power with God, that what he prays for, *i. e.*, wishes and wills, God readily performs; that thus God is entirely in the hands of the saint. Supplication is the means, under the guise of humility and submission, of exercising one's power and superiority over another being. That to which my mind first turns is also, in truth, the first being to me. I turn to the saint, not because the saint is dependent on God, but because God is dependent on the saint, because God is determined and ruled by the prayers, *i. e.*, by the wish or heart of the saint. The distinctions which the Catholic theologians made between *latreia*, *doulia*, and *hyperdoulia*, are absurd, groundless sophisms. The God in the background of the Mediator is only an abstract, inert conception, the conception or idea of the Godhead in general; and it is not to reconcile us with this idea, but to remove it to a distance, to negative it, because it is no object for religion, that the Mediator interposes.[53] God above the Mediator is nothing else than the cold understanding above the heart, like Fate above the Olympic gods.

Man, as an emotional and sensuous being, is governed and made happy only by images, by sensible representations. Mind presenting itself as at once type-creating, emotional, and sensuous, is the imagination. The second Person in God, who is in truth the first person in religion, is the nature of the imagination made objective. The definitions of the second Person are principally images or symbols; and these images do not proceed from man's incapability of conceiving the object otherwise than symbolically, – which is an altogether false interpretation, – but the thing cannot be conceived otherwise than symbolically because the thing itself is a symbol or image. The Son is, therefore, expressly called the Image of God; his essence is that he is an image – the representation of God, the visible glory of the invisible God. The Son is the satisfaction of the need for mental images, the nature of the imaginative activity in man made objective as an absolute, divine activity. Man makes to himself an image of God, *i. e.*, he converts the abstract being of the reason, the being of the thinking power, into an object of sense or imagination.[54] But he places this image in God himself, because his want would not be satisfied if he did not regard this image as an objective reality, if it were nothing more for him than a subjective image, separate from God, – a mere figment devised by man. And it is in fact no devised, no arbitrary image; for it expresses the necessity of the imagination, the necessity of affirming the imagination as a divine power. The Son is the reflected splendour of the imagination,

[52] "Negas ergo Deum, si non omnia filio, quæ Dei sunt, deferentur." – Ambrosius de Fide ad Gratianum, l. iii. c. 7. On the same ground the Latin Church adhered so tenaciously to the dogma that the Holy Spirit proceeded not from the Father alone, as the Greek Church maintained, but from the Son also. See on this subject J. G. Walchii, Hist. Contr. Gr. et Lat. de Proc. Spir. S. Jenæ, 1751.

[53] This is expressed very significantly in the Incarnation. God renounces, denies his majesty, power, and affinity, in order to become a man; *i. e.*, man denies the God who is not himself a man, and only affirms the God who affirms man. *Exinanivit*, says St. Bernard, *majestate et potentia, non bonitate et misericordia*. That which cannot be renounced, cannot be denied, is thus the Divine goodness and mercy, *i. e.*, the self-affirmation of the human heart.

[54] It is obvious that the Image of God has also another signification, namely, that the personal, visible man is God himself. But here the image is considered simply as an image.

the image dearest to the heart; but for the very reason that he is only an object of the imagination, he is only the nature of the imagination made objective.[55]

It is clear from this how blinded by prejudice dogmatic speculation is, when, entirely overlooking the inward genesis of the Son of God as the Image of God, it demonstrates the Son as a metaphysical *ens*, as an object of thought, whereas the Son is a declension, a falling off from the metaphysical idea of the Godhead; – a falling off, however, which religion naturally places in God himself, in order to justify it, and not to feel it as a falling off. The Son is the chief and ultimate principle of image-worship, for he is the image of God; and the image necessarily takes the place of the thing. The adoration of the saint in his image is the adoration of the image as the saint. Wherever the image is the essential expression, the organ of religion, there also it is the essence of religion.

The Council of Nice adduced, amongst other grounds for the religious use of images, the authority of Gregory of Nyssa, who said that he could never look at an image which represented the sacrifice of Isaac without being moved to tears, because it so vividly brought before him that event in sacred history. But the effect of the represented object is not the effect of the object as such, but the effect of the representation. The holy object is simply the haze of holiness in which the image veils its mysterious power. The religious object is only a pretext, by means of which art or imagination can exercise its dominion over men unhindered. For the religious consciousness, it is true, the sacredness of the image is associated, and necessarily so, only with the sacredness of the object; but the religious consciousness is not the measure of truth. Indeed, the Church itself, while insisting on the distinction between the image and the object of the image, and denying that the worship is paid to the image, has at the same time made at least an indirect admission of the truth, by itself declaring the sacredness of the image.[56]

But the ultimate, highest principle of image-worship is the worship of the Image of God in God. The Son, who is the "brightness of his glory, the express image of his person," is the entrancing splendour of the imagination, which only manifests itself in visible images. Both to inward and outward contemplation the representation of Christ, the Image of God, was the image of images. The images of the saints are only optical multiplications of one and the same image. The speculative deduction of the Image of God is therefore nothing more than an unconscious deduction and establishing of image-worship: for the sanction of the principle is also the sanction of its necessary consequences; the sanction of the archetype is the sanction of its semblance. If God has an image of himself, why should not I have an image of God? If God loves his Image as himself, why should not I also love the Image of God as I love God himself? If the Image of God is God himself, why should not the image of the saint be the saint himself? If it is no superstition to believe that the image which God makes of himself is no image, no mere conception, but a substance, a person, why should it be a superstition to believe that the image of the saint is the sensitive substance of the saint? The Image of God weeps and bleeds; why then should not the image of a saint also weep and bleed? Does the distinction lie in the fact that the image of the saint is a product of the hands? Why, the hands did not make this image, but the mind which animated the hands, the imagination; and if God makes an image of himself, that also is only a product of the imagination. Or does the distinction proceed from this, that the Image of God is produced by God himself, whereas the image of the saint is made by another? Why, the image of the saint is also a product of the saint himself: for he appears to the artist; the artist only represents him as he appears.

Connected with the nature of the image is another definition of the second Person, namely, that he is the Word of God.

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[55] Let the reader only consider, for example, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Christ.

[56] "Sacram imaginem Domini nostri Jesu Christi et omnium Salvatoris æquo honore cum libro sanctorum evangeliorum adorari decernimus… Dignum est enim ut … propter honorem qui ad principia refertur, etiam derivative imagines honorentur et adorentur." – Gener. Const. Conc. viii. Art. 10, Can. 3.

A word is an abstract image, the imaginary thing, or, in so far as everything is ultimately an object of the thinking power, it is the imagined thought: hence men, when they know the word, the name for a thing, fancy that they know the thing also. Words are a result of the imagination. Sleepers who dream vividly and invalids who are delirious speak. The power of speech is a poetic talent. Brutes do not speak because they have no poetic faculty. Thought expresses itself only by images; the power by which thought expresses itself is the imagination; the imagination expressing itself is speech. He who speaks, lays under a spell, fascinates those to whom he speaks; but the power of words is the power of the imagination. Therefore to the ancients, as children of the imagination, the Word was a being – a mysterious, magically powerful being. Even the Christians, and not only the vulgar among them, but also the learned, the Fathers of the Church, attached to the mere *name* Christ, mysterious powers of healing.[57] And in the present day the common people still believe that it is possible to bewitch men by mere words. Whence comes this ascription of imaginary influences to words? Simply from this, that words themselves are only a result of the imagination, and hence have the effect of a narcotic on man, imprison him under the power of the imagination. Words possess a revolutionising force; words govern mankind. Words are held sacred; while the *things* of reason and truth are decried.

The affirming or making objective of the nature of the imagination is therefore directly connected with the affirming or making objective of the nature of speech, of the word. Man has not only an instinct, an internal necessity, which impels him to think, to perceive, to imagine; he has also the impulse to speak, to utter, impart his thoughts. A divine impulse this – a divine power, the power of words. The word is the imaged, revealed, radiating, lustrous, enlightening thought. The word is the light of the world. The word guides to all truth, unfolds all mysteries, reveals the unseen, makes present the past and the future, defines the infinite, perpetuates the transient. Men pass away, the word remains; the word is life and truth. All power is given to the word: the word makes the blind see and the lame walk, heals the sick, and brings the dead to life; – the word works miracles, and the only rational miracles. The word is the gospel, the paraclete of mankind. To convince thyself of the divine nature of speech, imagine thyself alone and forsaken, yet acquainted with language; and imagine thyself further hearing for the first time the word of a human being: would not this word seem to thee angelic? would it not sound like the voice of God himself, like heavenly music? Words are not really less rich, less pregnant than music, though music seems to say more, and appears deeper and richer than words, for this reason simply, that it is invested with that prepossession, that illusion.

The word has power to redeem, to reconcile, to bless, to make free. The sins which we confess are forgiven us by virtue of the divine power of the word. The dying man who gives forth in speech his long-concealed sins departs reconciled. The forgiveness of sins lies in the confession of sins. The sorrows which we confide to our friend are already half healed. Whenever we speak of a subject, the passions which it has excited in us are allayed; we see more clearly; the object of anger, of vexation, of sorrow, appears to us in a light in which we perceive the unworthiness of those passions. If we are in darkness and doubt on any matter, we need only speak of it; – often in the very moment in which we open our lips to consult a friend, the doubts and difficulties disappear. The word makes man free. He who cannot express himself is a slave. Hence, excessive passion, excessive joy, excessive grief, are speechless. To speak is an act of freedom; the word is freedom. Justly therefore is language held to be the root of culture; where language is cultivated, man is cultivated. The barbarism of the Middle Ages disappeared before the revival of language.

As we can conceive nothing else as a Divine Being than the Rational which we think, the Good which we love, the Beautiful which we perceive; so we know no higher spiritually operative power and expression of power than the power of the Word.[58] God is the sum of all reality. All that man feels or

[57] "Tanta certe vis nomini Jesu inest contra dæmones, ut nonnunquam etiam a malis nominatum sit efficax." – Origenes adv. Celsum, l. i; see also l. iii.

[58] "God reveals himself to us, as the Speaker, who has, in himself, an eternal uncreated Word, whereby he created the world and all things, with slight labour, namely, with speech, so that to God it is not more difficult to create than it is to us to name." –

knows as a reality he must place in God or regard as God. Religion must therefore be conscious of the power of the word as a divine power. The Word of God is the divinity of the word, as it becomes an object to man within the sphere of religion, – the true nature of the human word. The Word of God is supposed to be distinguished from the human word in that it is no transient breath, but an imparted being. But does not the word of man also contain the being of man, his imparted self, – at least when it is a true word? Thus religion takes the *appearance* of the human word for its essence; hence it necessarily conceives the true nature of the Word to be a special being, distinct from the human word.

Luther, Th. i. p. 302.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE MYSTERY OF THE COSMOGONICAL PRINCIPLE IN GOD

The second Person, as God revealing, manifesting, declaring himself (*Deus se dicit*), is the world-creating principle in God. But this means nothing else than that the second Person is intermediate between the noumenal nature of God and the phenomenal nature of the world, that he is the divine principle of the finite, of that which is distinguished from God. The second Person as begotten, as not *à se*, not existing of himself, has the fundamental condition of the finite in himself.[59] But at the same time, he is not yet a real finite Being, posited out of God; on the contrary, he is still identical with God, – as identical as the son is with the father, the son being indeed another person, but still of like nature with the father. The second Person, therefore, does not represent to us the pure idea of the Godhead, but neither does he represent the pure idea of humanity, or of reality in general: he is an intermediate Being between the two opposites. The opposition of the noumenal or invisible divine nature and the phenomenal or visible nature of the world, is, however, nothing else than the opposition between the nature of abstraction and the nature of perception; but that which connects abstraction with perception is the imagination: consequently, the transition from God to the world by means of the second Person, is only the form in which religion makes objective the transition from abstraction to perception by means of the imagination. It is the imagination alone by which man neutralises the opposition between God and the world. All religious cosmogonies are products of the imagination. Every being, intermediate between God and the world, let it be defined how it may, is a being of the imagination. The psychological truth and necessity which lies at the foundation of all these theogonies and cosmogonies is the truth and necessity of the imagination as a middle term between the abstract and concrete. And the task of philosophy in investigating this subject is to comprehend the relation of the imagination to the reason, – the genesis of the image by means of which an object of thought becomes an object of sense, of feeling.

But the nature of the imagination is the complete, exhaustive truth of the cosmogonic principle, only where the antithesis of God and the world expresses nothing but the indefinite antithesis of the noumenal, invisible, incomprehensible being, God, and the visible, tangible existence of the world. If, on the other hand, the cosmogonic being is conceived and expressed abstractly, as is the case in religious speculation, we have also to recognise a more abstract psychological truth as its foundation.

The world is not God; it is other than God, the opposite of God, or at least that which is different from God. But that which is different from God cannot have come immediately from God, but only from a distinction of God in God. The second Person is God distinguishing himself from himself in himself, setting himself opposite to himself, hence being an object to himself. The self-distinguishing of God from himself is the ground of that which is different from himself, and thus self-consciousness is the origin of the world. God first thinks the world in thinking himself: to think oneself is to beget oneself, to think the world is to create the world. Begetting precedes creating. The idea of the production of the world, of another being who is *not* God, is attained through the idea of the production of another being who is *like* God.

This cosmogonical process is nothing else than the mystic paraphrase of a psychological process, nothing else than the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness made objective. God thinks himself: – thus he is self-conscious. God is self-consciousness posited as an object, as a being; but inasmuch as he knows himself, thinks himself, he also thinks another than himself; for to

[59] "Hylarius … Si quis innascibilem et sine initio dicat filium, quasi duo sine principio et duo innascibilia, et duo innata dicens, duos faciat Deos, anathema sit. Caput autem quod est principium Christi, Deus… Filium innascibilem confiteri impiissimum est." – Petrus Lomb. Sent. l. i. dist. 31, c. 4.

know oneself is to distinguish oneself from another, whether this be a possible, merely conceptional, or a real being. Thus the world – at least the possibility, the idea of the world – is posited with consciousness, or rather conveyed in it. The Son, *i. e.*, God thought by himself, objective to himself, the original reflection of God, the other God, is the principle of creation. The truth which lies at the foundation of this is the nature of man: the identity of his self-consciousness with his consciousness of another who is identical with himself, and of another who is not identical with himself. And the second, the other who is of like nature, is necessarily the middle term between the first and third. The idea of another in general, of one who is essentially different from me, arises to me first through the idea of one who is essentially like me.

Consciousness of the world is the consciousness of my limitation: if I knew nothing of a world, I should know nothing of limits; but the consciousness of my limitation stands in contradiction with the impulse of my egoism towards unlimitedness. Thus from egoism conceived as absolute (God is the absolute Self) I cannot pass immediately to its opposite; I must introduce, prelude, moderate this contradiction by the consciousness of a being who is indeed another, and in so far gives me the perception of my limitation, but in such a way as at the same time to affirm my own nature, make my nature objective to me. The consciousness of the world is a humiliating consciousness; the creation was an "act of humility;" but the first stone against which the pride of egoism stumbles is the *thou*, the *alter ego*. The *ego* first steels its glance in the eye of a *thou* before it endures the contemplation of a being which does not reflect its own image. My fellow-man is the bond between me and the world. I am, and I feel myself, dependent on the world, because I first feel myself dependent on other men. If I did not need man, I should not need the world. I reconcile myself with the world only through my fellow-man. Without other men, the world would be for me not only dead and empty, but meaningless. Only through his fellow does man become clear to himself and self-conscious; but only when I am clear to myself does the world become clear to me. A man existing absolutely alone would lose himself without any sense of his individuality in the ocean of Nature; he would neither comprehend himself as man nor Nature as Nature. The first object of man is man. The sense of Nature, which opens to us the consciousness of the world as a world, is a later product; for it first arises through the distinction of man from himself. The natural philosophers of Greece were preceded by the so-called seven Sages, whose wisdom had immediate reference to human life only.

The *ego*, then, attains to consciousness of the world through consciousness of the *thou*. Thus man is the God of man. That he is, he has to thank Nature; that he is man, he has to thank man; spiritually as well as physically he can achieve nothing without his fellow-man. Four hands can do more than two, but also four eyes can see more than two. And this combined power is distinguished not only in quantity but also in quality from that which is solitary. In isolation human power is limited, in combination it is infinite. The knowledge of a single man is limited, but reason, science, is unlimited, for it is a common act of mankind; and it is so, not only because innumerable men co-operate in the construction of science, but also in the more profound sense, that the scientific genius of a particular age comprehends in itself the thinking powers of the preceding age, though it modifies them in accordance with its own special character. Wit, acumen, imagination, feeling as distinguished from sensation, reason as a subjective faculty, – all these so-called powers of the soul are powers of humanity, not of man as an individual; they are products of culture, products of human society. Only where man has contact and friction with his fellow-man are wit and sagacity kindled; hence there is more wit in the town than in the country, more in great towns than in small ones. Only where man suns and warms himself in the proximity of man arise feeling and imagination. Love, which requires mutuality, is the spring of poetry; and only where man communicates with man, only in speech, a social act, awakes reason. To ask a question and to answer are the first acts of thought. Thought originally demands two. It is not until man has reached an advanced stage of culture that he can double himself, so as to play the part of another within himself. To think and to speak are therefore, with all ancient and sensuous nations, identical; they think only in speaking; their thought

is only conversation. The common people, *i. e.*, people in whom the power of abstraction has not been developed, are still incapable of understanding what is written if they do not read it audibly, if they do not pronounce what they read. In this point of view Hobbes correctly enough derives the understanding of man from his ears!

Reduced to abstract logical categories, the creative principle in God expresses nothing further than the tautological proposition: the different can only proceed from a principle of difference, not from a simple being. However the Christian philosophers and theologians insisted on the creation of the world out of nothing, they were unable altogether to evade the old axiom – "Nothing comes from nothing," because it expresses a law of thought. It is true that they supposed no real matter as the principle of the diversity of material things, but they made the divine understanding (and the Son is the wisdom, the science, the understanding of the Father) – as that which comprehends within itself all things as *spiritual matter*– the principle of real matter. The distinction between the heathen eternity of matter and the Christian creation in this respect is only that the heathens ascribed to the world a real, objective eternity, whereas the Christians gave it an invisible, immaterial eternity. Things were before they existed positively, – not, indeed, as an object of sense, but of the subjective understanding. The Christians, whose principle is that of absolute subjectivity, conceive all things as effected only through this principle. The matter posited by their subjective thought, conceptional, subjective matter, is therefore to them the first matter, – far more excellent than real, objective matter. Nevertheless, this distinction is only a distinction in the mode of existence. The world is eternal in God. Or did it spring up in him as a sudden idea, a caprice? Certainly man can conceive this too; but, in doing so, he deifies nothing but his own irrationality. If, on the contrary, I abide by reason, I can only derive the world from its essence, its idea, *i. e.*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.