the shipwrecked mariner's strange adventures, and beholding with astonishment his manifest superiority to themselves in all manly exercises.

Now this matchless power of conceiving and representing human nature, in all its various phases, so rare in any poem, so universal in these; this were, of itself, sufficient to demonstrate the absurdity of the hypothesis, which refers the Iliad and Odyssey to a number of different authors. But when we further observe the consistency with which each character is sustained, from the beginning of the Iliad to the end of the Odyssey, we see the most convincing demonstration that both poems must have proceeded from one and the same author. That consistent and complete idea of Ulysses, for instance, could not have been the offspring of more than one mind. As well might Ulysses himself have been the son of more than one father. That portrait of Helen, begun in the Iliad and finished in the Odyssey, is no patchwork of several authors. As well might Guido's Magdalen have been painted by half a dozen different masters. Each one of the characters, of either or both of the poems, is as palpably and necessarily the work of one hand, as the Venus de Medici or the Apollo Belvidere.

ARTICLE II.

FEUERBACH'S ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.[1]

By Rev. Charles C. Tiffany, Derby, Ct.

THE English and American public is indebted to the translator of *Strauss's* "*Leben Jesu*," for the appearance of *Feuerbach's* "*Wesen des Christenthum's*," in an English dress.

[1] DAS WESEN DES CHRISTENTHUMS, von *Ludwig Feuerbach*. Leipzig, 1843. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. By Ludwig Feuerbach. Translated from the second German edition by *Marian Evans*.

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It is an indebtedness we should willingly have foregone; but, as it has been forced upon us, we must fain take some notice of the obligation, if it be merely to protest against it. It is a matter of no little surprise that a woman should have undertaken the task, in both these instances, of introducing to her countrymen and kinsmen works which, if accepted as true, would overturn the only religious system which has accorded to woman her present elevated position. Even were there room to doubt this in regard to Strauss's Life of Christ, there can be none in regard to the work of Feuerbach. In him we have the natural result of the various attempts at an idealistic solution of the Christian Religion, viz. the attempt to overthrow all religion. Nor does he mask his design. He does not retain the shell after he has extracted the kernel. Christianity with its life departed is, to him, no more than any other dead system; fit only to be buried out of the sight of men. He does, indeed, attribute a certain worth to it; but this worth is only its destruction; for the only praise he bestows upon it is, that it most easily, of all religions, leads to Atheism. It might seem to some that such a work was not the one most demanded by the exigencies of our times. How unphilosophical soever all forms of religion may be, they have yet ever proved safeguards to society, preserving its morals and protecting its property; nor are there, to most minds, many signs that such safeguards are not still needed. But with Feuerbach and his translators the case is different. The inclination of men to practical atheism is not sufficient. It must be demonstrated to be the only philosophical belief. A theory must be formed to justify the practice. Hence this book.

The book proceeds upon a philosophical method. It aims to show, from the nature of the mind, that a belief in God is impossible; that all supposed belief in him is an illusion; and that, hence, religion is only a round in the ladder of human progress, and that by no means the highest, to be trodden upon and left behind. Let us examine the theory and trace its results.

A word or two in relation to the author's philosophical

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position, may not be out of place as a preliminary to the investigation of his book.

Feuerbach belonged to those followers of Hegel which constitute the so-called Left-wing of the school. They are destructive in their tendency, and stand out in marked contrast with the more conservative Right-wing. The latter do not deny a belief in a personal God, or even in historical Christianity; while the former belong, almost universally, to the Pantheistic schools. Indeed, this would seem to be the more legitimate consequence of a system which seeks to develop the universe and all its contents from the categories included in the human mind. For, as the whole proceeds with the strictest logical connection, admitting no break, each succeeding category being developed from the former by a logical necessity — *developed* out of it as the flower from the bud, and the fruit from the flower; where can there arise anything which is not strictly human? Even the highest results of this philosophy must be included in the mind which gives it birth; and nothing which it can attain can surpass the instrument of its attainment. For, according to its fundamental principle, the mind investigates itself, and what it discovers is itself. The Absolute, therefore, which it is its boast ultimately to attain, cannot be more than human in quality, nor can it be other than the mind. The term *absolute* excludes the *individual* indeed, but not the essence of the individual. It is, in fact, the universal essence, including all the manifestations of essence. The material universe offers no stumbling-block to this theory; for, to the strict Hegelian, it can have no other than a subjective existence.[1] But even where its objective reality is granted, it is only assumed to be a different manifestation of the same essence. The Absolute is therefore called, in its deepest significance, *subject* and *spirit*, though this Absolute spirit comes to consciousness only in the finite spirit.

[1] Hegel started, indeed, with the idea of giving the logical development to Schelling's Philosophical View of the Identity of Subject and Object — mind and matter, but he soon found that on his own theory this was inconsequent and went over to Idealism. Not so, however, with all his followers.

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Whether, therefore, this Absolute be called God, or what you will, it is, in reality, nothing over and above man and nature. Both these are its manifestations; or, rather, are it; for, without them, it is not. A *jeuseits*, or a something beyond, is the most fearful heresy in the Hegelian list.

It requires no very strong effort to change this Absolute spirit, which comes to its full reality alone in man, completely into man's essence and consciousness; to transform the process, and assume that man does not arise from the Absolute, but the Absolute from man; that man is not the Absolute, set as something other than the Absolute; but that the Absolute is man set as something other than man. The God, or the Absolute, thus attained, would of course have no worth beyond that of a human conception; would, in fact, be nothing more than man viewing himself as the Absolute, or God.

This, Feuerbach has done; and this is the key to his whole system. This principle is deduced and carried out in the following manner: —

His work is divided into an Introduction and two Parts. The *Introduction* treats of:

The Nature of Man in general.

The Nature of Religion in general.

The *First Part* contains:

The true or Anthropological Essence of Religion.

The *Second Part:*

The false or theological Essence of Religion.

It is in the Introduction that we get at the germ from which all the rest proceeds; for, after he has laid down the principles, his results follow as a matter of course.

His doctrine of the nature of man, is as follows: The essential distinction between men and beasts lies in *Consciousness.* But it is consciousness in its strictest sense; not the consciousness of the individual of himself, but his consciousness of his kind, his genus. Beasts are conscious of themselves, as distinct from other external objects. But only men are conscious of themselves as distinguished from their essence, or genus. A subject, in the true sense, includes an

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object; it is nothing without it; only so far as it has an object, is it subject. But the object which is the full complement of the subject, can only be the objectified subject itself. Hence man as a subject can be conscious of nothing which is out of his essence; for, only that which is in his essence, can be himself objectified. Of whatever a man is conscious, therefore, he is conscious only of himself in it.

What, then, is the essence of man, he asks, of which he is conscious? what constitutes his genus — the peculiar humanity in man? He answers: the Reason, the Will, the Heart. These three are *not powers* which a man has, *but are his constitutive Elements*, they are the *absolute essence* of man as such. They are themselves limitless; they rule the individual, and are not ruled by him.

As these, the essence of man, are limitless, so also is the consciousness; since what is in the essence is in the consciousness. The consciousness of man *as an individual* is limited; but *not* his consciousness of himself *as man;* and when we limit the consciousness, it is because we transfer the limitation of the individual to the genus, or essence, which is an error. Indeed, the individual is conscious of himself *as limited*, only because the object by means of which he becomes conscious of himself as individual subject, is his perfect, illimitable genus. For the essence of a thing must be all-sufficient for the thing; it cannot get beyond it. If the understanding denied what the essence asserted, it would show that it was the understanding not of this, but of some other essence. When therefore I think of the Infinite, I only think the infiniteness of the thinking capability ("*Denkvermögens*"). So when I feel the Infinite, I only feel the infiniteness of the "power of feeling;" and if feeling is the *essential* organ of religion, then the essence of God or religion is only the essence of feeling. Thus a being cannot be conscious of itself as limited; for its essence is, for it, unlimited, and it can be conscious only of its essence.

Having determined thus much concerning the nature of man, Feuerbach proceeds to apply this to the *nature of Religion*, which is peculiar to man.

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In the outset he makes the assumption (which, though inconsequent, betrays the animus of the book), that man can distinguish his consciousness of sensuous objects from his self-consciousness; but that, in regard to religious objects, the consciousness of them and the self-consciousness are identical. The sensuous object is without, the religious object, within man; and, in regard to the latter, it is true, without any limitation, that the object which the subject contemplates is only the objectified essence of the subject itself.

But though the consciousness of God is only self-consciousness, man is not directly conscious of this identity. It is the peculiar nature, the *differentia specifica*, of religion, that this consciousness is wanting. Religion is the relation of man to himself, i. e. to his own essence, as though he were another. Its mystery is, that man objectifies himself, and makes himself the object of this objectified self, which it transforms thus into a subject.

Thus, in the various religions, we find the Deity corresponding to the people. When men lived in a state of nature, their god was a god of Nature. When they lived in houses, they built a Temple for the god. The Greek sculptors represented the gods as men of noble attributes; which signified, not that these were the attributes of a god, but that such attributes were divine. In the Christian religion, especially, we have this anthropology. All the attributes of God are human; they are the predicates of man, perfected and extended. These illustrations show that man has never been able to get beyond his own essence.

A further illustration of this truth that, as Schiller expresses it, "in their gods, men paint themselves," is seen from the fact that the more human the essence of God, the greater is the difference between him as subject and man as object. The one complements the other. The more the senses are denied, the more sensuous the deity. The nun will have no husband; but becomes, thereby, the bride of the church. The monk assumes a voluntary poverty, only to find increased riches in heaven. The family tie on earth is

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looked down upon, but only to be glorified in the Madonna-worship above. Good is denied to man, to increase the goodness of God. Augustine and Pelagius really taught the same thing; only Augustine took a more round-about way, and viewed man's goodness in his objectified self, instead of, like Pelagius, in himself immediately. The religious man makes God his aim; but the aim of God is man's salvation; hence man makes himself his aim, after all. In fact, religion is the most complete egoism.

Thus religion is man's first and indirect self-knowledge. It precedes philosophy as well in the history of the race as in the experience of the individual. The historical process in religion is, that, what at first is viewed as objective, is afterward considered as subjective, e. g. the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament. Then when man objectifies his genus—his essential nature, instead of his person—he still, upon further reflection, comes to withdraw, into himself, this essence he had objectified; to bring back again, to himself, the man which, as god, he had set out of himself. The way he accomplishes this, is to change what, in religion, was a predicate into a subject, and vice versa; and thus change the oracular sayings of religion, and take them in the sense of *contre-vérités*. The philosopher would not say God is true, loving, wise, powerful; but truth, love, wisdom, power are divine, i. e. the perfection of the human essence. For, are not all these attributes human? As Leibnitz says: "Les perfections de Dieu sont celles des nos âmes, mais il les possède sans bornes . . il y a en nous quelque puissance, quelque connaissance, quelque bonté, mais elles sont toutes entières en Dieu;" and does not science teach us that we can know no other being than our own; and is not this, our essence, *limitless?* Therefore man cannot, and if he could has no need to, go out of himself. He is self-sufficient. And religion is a delusion, only good as a stage in his culture, to perfect his self-knowledge.

Such are the principles on which Feuerbach's whole fabric rests; or, rather, by means of which he aims to destroy every religious fabric. Let us examine them more closely before we proceed to their results.

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In regard to man, it is evident that he starts with the assumption of that which he ought to prove, viz. that man can be conscious only of what is in him, or rather in his nature or essence. And yet this is the position which lies at the bottom of his whole subsequent theory; which, if it be disturbed, brings the whole structure to the ground with it. He starts with the most extreme idealism, and demands that it be received as an axiom. It is true that, when he comes to speak of religion, he declares that the self-consciousness and the world-consciousness may be distinguished; which is not the case with the religious consciousness and the self-consciousness. But though here he seems to favor the view of Kant in relation to the outer world, so far as to regard it as a necessary means by which man comes to a consciousness of himself; yet unlike Kant, who views it as an inexplicable phenomenon, a *Nicht über sich hinauskönnen* of the human spirit (which may perhaps, in its ultimate essence, be the same as the spirit; though of this *Ding an Sich* nothing can be known), and therefore as a limitation of the spirit; unlike him, Feuerbach would, from his whole method of treatment, seem to regard it more in the light of the *nicht Ich*, the *not me*, of Fichte; that is, in the light of complete subjectivism.

At the starting-point, therefore, the warfare must commence. There can be no truce between those who assert and those who deny the objective reality of the material universe. Both start with assumptions; the only question is, which assumption is the best grounded. It would, of course, be folly to attempt to convince the determined advocate of subjectivism that his position is false, for he already moves in a different sphere; the more the argument affects him, the more it appeals to his understanding, so much the stronger is the presumption that it is from and of himself. But to one who has not yet fully committed himself to this theory, there are strong arguments against it: his own intuitive belief, before he reflects, so strong that it is interwoven with all his modes of thought, and which still haunts man long after he has rejected the belief as unreasonable; the universal

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belief of mankind, with scarcely an exception, in the same; and the fact that it has never been doubted, save when man has attempted to explain, from himself, the whole universe without and within him; the fact, also, that man must make a like assumption in regard to himself, if he is to view his spirit as anything enduring, as anything but a succession of thoughts and emotions, with no living continuity in them; — all these facts give great weight and reasonableness to the judgment of mankind, that subjectivism is a diseased state of the mind. For, the belief in an external world, seems to be as intuitive as a belief in our own existence; and the same doubt, in regard to the existence of the outer, may apply to the inner, world. We cannot, indeed, deny our sensations; but it is only by an intuitive belief that we assert that they are *ours*, that there is a subject in which these sensations inhere. Indeed, the sad state of Fichte, in his old age, seems to be the legitimate result of his philosophy. Starting in youth with his idealistic theory, instinct with enthusiasm, and asserting, with an ardor which almost degenerated into arrogance, the certainty and satisfactoriness of his conclusions, at the close of his life he speaks like one in a bewildered dream: "There is nothing enduring," he writes, "either without me or within me; but only a ceaseless change. I am sure of no existence, not even of my own. Pictures are all that exist, and all reality changes into a wondrous dream."

For these reasons, therefore, we must join issue with Feuerbach at the starting-point, and deny the validity of his assumption. But if this assumption be not true, the whole intellectual basis of his system gives way. It is built upon the sand, and crumbles at the first earnest blow. For if there is an external material universe, of which I am conscious, why may there not be a spiritual existence without me, of which I may be conscious also? Certainly in the nature of the case there is no reason; for, if I may be conscious of one object which is external, and different from my nature, I may be conscious of another which is external, and of the same spiritual nature. If the objective reality of the mate-

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rial universe be granted, the greatest difficulty is already surmounted, viz. the difficulty of apprehending not only an external, but a differently constituted object. For though, in agreement with the intimation of Kant, and the positive assertion of Schilling, nature be viewed as but a different form of spirit, still the form is so different as to make it more difficult of apprehension than spirit in a form analogous to the human spirit.

The possibility, therefore, of apprehending a spiritual object not contained in our self-consciousness being granted, all Feuerbach's objections from the relation of subject and object are swept away. For though *nothing less* than one's objectified self can be the full complement of one's self as subject, it does not follow that *a greater than self* may not be. And if it be objected that, if this greater than self be recognized *as greater*, the subject apprehending already assumes an equality with the object apprehended, else how could it measure it, this objection would only apply to the power of originating the object, not in recognizing it when revealed. For, as in the material world, I can see and recognize objects far greater than my body; as, among men, I can see and recognize those possessing greater powers than my own, so can I, when it is revealed to me, recognize a being far greater than my own nature is capable of becoming; a being which I recognize as greater *because I cannot measure it.* It is true that this being must have a nature kindred to my own; but it need not be my own. I must be able to predicate all that *I* have, of him; but not necessarily all that *he* has, of myself. What of likeness there is, may come to me in such a way as to convince me that much remains behind which I cannot now apprehend. Just as the individual feels himself limited in comparison with the possibilities of his nature, so may he feel his nature limited in comparison with another higher than, though analogous to, his own. And this analogy between the human and Divine, no Christian would ever deny; for, it is a fundamental article of his creed, that man is created in the image of God.

If, then, our observations be correct, all Feuerbach's asser-

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tions concerning the essence or nature of man as limitless, are mere assertions, liable to scrutiny and criticism, and by no means axiomatic. But if the inherent necessity of his positions be not granted, they are not to be defended. Indeed, Feuerbach's whole treatment of the Infinite, has the appearance of a make-shift. He cannot deny that mankind has the idea, for it is too patent to be overlooked. But granting this, he will sever the idea completely from what has always been regarded as an essential part of it, viz. that it is suggested by the limitations of humanity as such, and that it can alone be predicated of what is above the human, not only in degree but in kind; since finiteness cleaves to the very idea of humanity. Of course, if it were demonstrated that man can be conscious of his own genus only, and the idea of infinity excited, then we should have to attribute infinity of the genus. But it is no demonstration to assert this of the consciousness, and then adduce the idea of infinity as proof of the infiniteness of the genus, especially in face of the concurrent testimony of mankind, which has always placed the infinite beyond itself. Indeed, this concurrent testimony of mankind and the intuitive belief of the individual in the existence of an Infinite Being beyond and above man afford, as in regard to the existence of the external world, a presumption in its favor which nothing can overthrow, but a demonstration of its impossibility. And therefore we say that this impossibility not being shown, there is every reason for believing that there is such a being. Take away the necessity of not believing, and there remains the necessity to believe.

It is true, that all those who have believed in the Infinite or Absolute, have not believed in an Absolute personal Being. But even the Pantheists add the weight of their testimony against Feuerbach, since they make man to be, not himself the Absolute, but only a manifestation of the Absolute; so that to them even, their remains a kind of religion, not in the theistic sense, indeed, as the relation of conscious spirit to conscious spirit, but as "the relation of man to the Absolute which is realizing itself in him, as the retrogression of man into the still eternal ground of his being;" "the

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relation, in fine, of man to the divine, which though it dwell immediately in him is yet greater than he." But Feuerbach would strip from man even this gossamer web of religion; and, denying the possibility of anything beyond man, makes all worship self-worship; and the only true belief, atheism. He thus stands opposed to all thinkers, whether pantheists, deists, or theists, who have at least this common ground, that they hold to something beyond man and over him. And therefore we repeat that, unless all this consciousness of something greater than man be *proved* a delusion, and its impossibility *demonstrated*, there is no support for Feuerbach's theory. Least of all can we receive it upon a mere assertion, that man is self-sufficient, when the whole history of the human mind, the learned as well as the ignorant, gives a plain and emphatic denial of the fact.

Having thus pointed out, as we trust, the intellectual error lying at the basis of this fallacious system, let us scrutinize, yet more closely, the theory of religion built upon it.

And, in the first place, Feuerbach starts with an assertion which, if it were true, would destroy all religion; nay, more, would preclude the possibility of its arising. We refer to the dogma that man is self-sufficient. "For," as Ullmann[1] well remarks, "religion has its origin in the fact that man is not satisfied in himself, and therefore seeks to complete himself in a higher Being. And, though religion is not, as Schleiermacher held, to be entirely comprehended in the feeling of dependence; yet it is certain that without this feeling there can be no religion." For if man were absolute, then he not only could not find another, but would have no need to seek him. He would remain centred in himself, self-satisfied because self-sufficient.

But, overlooking the inconsequence, our author takes the theory, and, in accordance with it, proceeds to show that man objectifies himself, and then takes this objectified self as his deity. The chief argument upon which he bases this

[1] See the chapter in the supplement to Ullman's *Wesen des Christenthums* (fourth revised edition) on Feuerbach's doctrine of Christianity, where the subject is admirably treated.

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assertion, apart from his theory of man's nature which we have considered, is the fact of the anthropomorphic representations of God among all nations. Now it is perfectly true that this anthropomorphism exists, and that mankind, in its more enlightened and cultivated states, has done away with many of those representations of the Deity which have prevailed in its earlier and ruder periods. But, though the form of representation has changed, men have not yet given up the idea. And, though we do not speak, now, of the hands or feet of the Deity, when we speak with philosophical accuracy, yet we do ascribe to God the same attributes of which these are the concrete, and even yet poetical expression, viz. that He has a nature which he uses as an instrument by which to affect us, that He does that which we effect by walking, listening, speaking. It is easy to see that if man is to form any living conception of the Deity, it must be through those forms of perception inherent in him. And it is not wonderful that, in earlier ages, when philosophical science and philosophical expression were almost unknown, that, even where the spiritual nature of God was as distinctly held as among the Jews, men should have ascribed to God those organs which are, in man, the inseparable accompaniments of spiritual power. As mental science advanced, it was natural that these expressions should be dropped; and yet so true is the idea which they express, that they have not and never will fall into complete disuetude, in animated discourse, so long as man is possessed of a material body. But it is wholly inconsequent to conclude, from this ascription of human qualities to God, that these qualities are all man has worshipped as God. The very fact that the idea has survived, undisturbed, by all these changes in its representation, is an overpowering evidence of its independence of them. And, though men now speak of God in terms which apply to their own finite natures, as they must if they speak at all; yet who of those who use these terms, supposes that they are literally correct? That they express a truth, all believe; but that they express it imperfectly, all acknowledge. "Now we see through a glass, ἐν αἰνίγ-

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ματι," but we see; "now we know in part," but we know. We cannot exhaust the fountain, but we may quaff its waters and be refreshed and strengthened thereby. The idea of God is independent of any form of representation, and we feel that we know the most when we divest ourselves of all forms, and bow silent and still before the ineffable Jehovah.

After he has thus shown that the self-sufficient being, man, objectifies himself, Feuerbach proceeds to state why he does so. It is in order that he may take himself back into himself, that he may feel the truth of his self-sufficiency. Having supplemented all his wants and cravings in his supposed deity, he wakes to the blissful consciousness that he is his Deity. He reverses the pious exclamation of the humble mystic, and says: "I, poor fool that I was, thought it was God; and lo! behold of a truth, it is and was I." Now, apart from the incongruity of this self-sufficient being having any want which compels him to deify himself in order to comprehend himself, it must be evident to every thoughtful mind that the wants of man, in his present state, would never be expressed by the character ascribed to God by most religions — especially by the Christian, with which we have here chiefly to do. What the mass of men, even of so-called Christian men, *want*, is not justice, purity, righteousness; but indulgence, license, sin. They do not want a God in the form of an objectified self, or in any form; but want to stifle the conscience, that voice of God in the soul, and forget that there is such purity and holiness looking down upon them, as their religion tells them there is. That they *need* these characteristics is obvious: but that they want them, in any such sense that they would ascribe them to a self-created Deity, is as far as possible from true. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." With shame be it spoken, the god of men's wishes is the lustful Jove, or drunken Bacchus, or crafty Mercury; and not the Being whose law is perfect, and whose commandment is pure. It is true that the god of man's wishes is not the one his understanding or reason would tell him he required; but Feuerbach strongly asserts

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that the understanding does not originate religion; much more, it discovers its falsity and destroys it. The heart is the creator of religion; and, in regard to Christianity, it is not the healthful, pure heart, but the diseased, selfish spirit, which only adopts, as law, that which pleases and favors itself. The ground on which he bases this assertion, is the fact that Christianity has for its object the eternal salvation of men; and hence men have created it in accordance with a most intense selfishness.

It seems almost impossible that any one could fall into such an error as this. For, apart from the fact that the selfish heart seeks no God, but, from its very nature, makes itself the object of its adoration, it is evident that the sensual, depraved heart would never seek such salvation as Christianity aims at. For, what is this salvation, but a salvation from sin; from those very dispositions and enjoyments which the natural man cherishes? And when we consider that this salvation is to be attained by no magical and instantaneous act, but involves a long course of self-denial, a constant mortification of all the desires of the depraved heart, it becomes palpably absurd to trace the origin of a religion of such means and ends to such a source.

There is, indeed, an element in Christianity which, when divorced from its rightful connections and viewed irrespective of the means by which it is attained, might be thus perverted. It is the element of happiness which is inseparably joined to the idea of holiness. But this happiness is far enough removed from that which the depraved, selfish man desires. It is the happiness resulting from purity and self-renunciation. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life, for my sake, shall find it," is the Christian formula of happiness; and it is no utterance of one who clings, with all his powers, to the gratification of his own selfish purposes. These selfish purposes must be renounced utterly, before man is capable of the happiness of heaven. And yet again, the happiness of man is not at all the chief object of the Christian religion. Its ultimate aim is the honor and glory of God, that he may be glorified in

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all things, that he may be all in all. Human happiness is a means to this end; but it is subordinate to the end. Hence the aim of Christianity transcends the bounds of human self-love, and cannot, therefore, find its origin in the same.

But it is a perversion of Christianity to consider it apart from the person of its Author. For the Christian religion is no mere system of doctrines, but it centres in and irradiates from Christ, who is, himself, the way, the truth, and the life. Of course, Feuerbach does not attribute any historical worth to the description of him in the Gospels. But even as a conception, is it the conception of the selfish heart of man? Would man, seeking himself, ever have held up as an example him who "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," for the sake of others? The motive, the aim, and the means of accomplishing the aim, of Christ's manifestation, are wholly foreign to the natural man. The circumstances of his life offend the carnal mind, and the purity of his character is completely above it. The historical development of his religion shows that he has been a stumbling-block and foolishness both to those who seek their own honor and those who seek their own happiness as their chief end. Whatever the origin of the conception, it could not have arisen from one who was less pure, less humble, less self-sacrificing, than he whom it depicts. This is not the place to discuss the historical worth of Christ's person; but of this much we may be sure, that, as he neither accords with the character, nor meets the wishes, of the selfish heart, he cannot be the product of the same.

We have thus devoted our chief attention to the general principles of Feuerbach, because they are the props of the whole system. It remains, however, to cast a glance at the positive results of his own construction of the true meaning of religion, as well as at the supposed absurdities found in the ordinarily received doctrines of Christianity; for Feuerbach does not hesitate to state both of these. He would be constructive, as well as destructive. Unlike many, who merely aim to destroy Christianity without giving us anything in

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its place, he boldly declares his positive results, and leaves us to judge how much we have gained from him.

The first part of the book contains "the true essence of religion." We shall endeavor to state the results of the principal chapters.

After he has treated of "*God as the essence of the understanding*," and "*God as moral being, or Law*," he undertakes to explain the illusory secrets of Christianity, by tracing them back to the elements of human nature. In this way he treats of *the mystery of the Incarnation, of a Suffering God; of the Trinity and the Mother of God; of the Logos; of the cosmogonal principle in God; of Mysticism or Nature in God; of Providence and the Creation from nothing*; and, after interposing a chapter on *the Jewish idea of Creation*, he proceeds to trace back, to human elements, *the mystery of prayer, of faith and miracles, of the resurrection and supernatural birth*; and adds three chapters on *the Difference between Christianity and Heathenism; the Christian Signification of Voluntary Celibacy;* and *the Christian Heaven, or Personal Immortality.*

In the first chapter, on "God as the essence of the Understanding," he defines the understanding to be the objective, impartial apprehension of things; and hence the god of the understanding, which is only the full objectified consciousness of the understanding, is the *pure* and *perfect* Divine Being; free from human attributes, it is mere abstract being. But this is only a necessary presupposition to religion; it can effect nothing, because mere generality; hence we must have the God of the heart, a subjective God. So, in the chapter on *God as moral being*, we have this developed. The heart is the subjective, interested apprehension of things. Objectified, therefore, it is the loving, human deity. In the understanding, we have merely the perfect Deity, without any touch of the human. But mere perfection does not affect man: he is imperfect, and needs sympathy; and this he gets in the God of the objectified heart. From this loving Deity of the heart, we derive the *Incarnation*. For the essential element in the Incarnation, is the love of God to man; or, the

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heart, objectified as the Divinity, making humanity its object. The idea of the "*Suffering God*," comes from the same; since love, or the heart, proves itself such through suffering. From the heart, also, the *Trinity* is derived. God the Father answers to the Understanding; God the Son, to the Heart; but, one more is needed to perfect the Divine Family. The Holy Spirit is too impalpable, and so the Mother of God is made the real completion of the divineness of social life, which is the truth expressed by the Trinity. *The Logos as the image of God* is the objectified imagination (phantasie), and arises from the necessity of asserting the divineness of the imagination. *The Logos as cosmogonal principle* in God, is the mean between the spiritual essence of God and the sensuous essence of the world; or, the objectified transition, by means of the imagination, from thought to reality. In the chapter on "*Mysticism or Nature in God*," the doctrines of Jacob Böhme, and Schelling in his treatise on freedom, are discussed; for the author seems to think that whatever thought has been awakened by Christianity, forms a part of its doctrine. The "*Creation from Nothing*" deifies the will, or, in truth, wilfulness or arbitrary will; so does the *Miracle* and also *Providence;* for the belief in Providence is the belief that my interest is God's interest, my own will is God's will. "*Prayer*" is the absolute relation of the heart to itself, the certainty that it is greater than all else. So *Faith* is the assurance of the reality of the subject as unlimited. Faith has to do especially with miracles, the resurrection, and supernatural birth; and what are these but the objectified belief of the heart, in itself, as unbound by laws of nature or reason? *The difference between Christianity and Heathenism* is this, that the latter makes the individual subordinate to the race; while the former, by means of its complete subjectivity, identifies the one with the other. Christ is only the perfected generic idea of the race, represented as an individual; and, very naturally, as supernatural person. Hence *the signification of Celibacy.* Since the perfect individual, representing the race, is supernatural, man's aim must be such. Freeing himself from the natural, marriage and the like relations,

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he strives for the supernatural. The *Christian heaven* is the objectified subjective life, free from limitation, in full accordance with the feeling.[1]

The Second Part of the book treats of "*the false or theological Essence of Religion.* It begins with a chapter on *the essential point of view in Religion*, which it defines to be the practical point of view; and then the author proceeds to show the contradiction of the true practical interest of man contained in the received doctrines of religion. The contradiction in the *existence of God* is, that real existence, apart from thought, is sensuous; and yet, God is defined to be not sensuous, while possessed of existence other than in thought. Its practical evil is, that it makes the mere existence, and not the character of God, the chief consideration. A *revelation from God* contradicts itself, in that God can only reveal what is conformable to man's nature; and hence a revelation is only a revelation of the nature of man to the existing man. Its practical effect is bad, in that it leads man to ground the moral law in a revelation, and not in morality. The evil connected with the *nature or essence of God* is, that making it to be anything but what it is, that is, making it to be another than man, is the prolific source of delusions and errors. Some of these supposed errors are noticed, as those in regard to the *incomprehensibility* of God, and his *personality.* Among the contradictions, in the nature of God, is the *Trinity;* against which the irrelevant mathematical objection is brought, that one cannot be one and three at the same time. In regard to the *sacraments*, there are only two, corresponding to the two Christian graces, Faith and Love (for Hope is only Faith in relation to a future event). Baptism corresponds to Faith; the Lord's Supper, to Love. But the idea of a sacrament is false; for it takes away a natural and proper use in the elements, and introduces a

[1] We have not deemed it necessary to do anything more than state the most general results of these chapters. Should any one, however, feel an interest in seeing them elaborately refuted, their false assumptions shown and their self-contradictions pointed out, we refer him to the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1842, 1st Heft, which contains a lengthened article on Feuerbach by *Dr. Julius Müller.*

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fanciful and unreal one. In regard to *Faith and Love*, on which the sacraments are based, we have, in them, a special contradiction. For, Faith is a conservative, limiting principle. Having a determined view to enforce, it is, from its nature, intolerant and persecuting; while Love is, from its nature, universal and lenient. And the closing remarks seek to show that love, as a principle, is not a product of Christianity; but that it existed, in heathenism, in a far more healthful form.

Such are the results of Feuerbach's criticism. That they show an entire misapprehension of the subject he undertakes to criticise, is sufficiently evident. For, what Protestant would ever think of defending the Madonna worship, the sanctity of celibacy, or Transubstantiation as genuine Christianity? The objections, too, to those doctrines which all Christians hold, are frivolous in the extreme. How does the belief in the existence of God, render subordinate a belief in his moral perfection? From the author's doctrine of the Nature of Man, his doctrine of a revelation natuarlly flows; but Christians have yet to learn that a moral law, because it is revealed, is any the less grounded in morality. And in regard to the alleged antagonism between faith and love, we humbly conceive that a faith in God, as our Father, who "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life," would produce a love kindred to the Father's.

Of the positive results of the system, as shown in the first part of the book, it is scarcely necessary to speak. We are glad to have them stated, for they give us the opportunity of comparing the new with the old, and of choosing between the two; and we cannot think it doubtful which will be the choice of sound sense and pure conscience. It is indeed the one feature of the book, which disarms it of its power for evil, that it attempts to construct as well as to destroy. For, though men may raise objections to parts and phases of Christianity; when they attempt to build up a system in its stead, their unsubstantial and tottering structures are a striking confirmation of the Apostle's assertion: "Other foun-

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dation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The book is written in a clear and flowing style, reminding us, painfully by contrast, of the lumbering though heavily-laden style of Müller, Nitzsch, Rothe, and other theologians, who have written in so different an interest. The anti-Christian writers of Germany, such as *Fr. Ch. Baur*, Schwegler, Strauss, and Feuerbach, like some who follow in their wake in our own country, seem perfect masters of the art of clothing their meagre representations of Christianity in the most elegant and flowing drapery. But the clearness and even enthusiasm of Feuerbach do not prevent a wearisome repetition of the same thought, only slightly modified in its expression. After the two chapters defining his principles, he brings in the same ideas, over and over again, all through the book. Though the translation has not reached us, the celebrity of the translator can leave no doubt of the elegance of the English style.

But we must again express our regret that such eminent ability has been devoted to such a task. The direct tendency of the book must be evil; and we deem it a very poor use of time to scatter such seed as this broad-cast over the land. Happily for us, not all women of distinguished ability and literary habits are in sympathy with Miss Martineau and Miss Evans. For we cannot forget our indebtedness to Miss Susanna Winkworth and Miss Catherine Winkworth, for their exquisite translations of the Theologica Germanica and the Lyra Germanica, books which, though humble in their pretensions, are antidotes to far more skilfully prepared poisons than those of Feuerbach.

But every cloud has its silver lining; and even this book may accomplish some good. It may serve to show to many, who would not otherwise know, what are the opinions of many of a large and largely increasing part of our population; and on what grounds they are supported. Many foreigners come to us possessed of the most baleful opinions, and entrench themselves from attack behind arguments and a subtle dialectic, which only need to be known to be over-

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thrown; but which often prove a stumbling-block in the way of those unacquainted with German modes of thought. Disgusted at religion at home, by seeing the despotism with which it is often connected, these men reject it as the legitimate ally of tyranny. Let us hope that, surrounded by the kindly influences of our own free atmosphere, approached in the right spirit, and with the proper intellectual preparation, many may be won to truer views and purer principles. If this book tend, in any degree, to forward so desirable a result, we shall rejoice in it.

In another way, it may be made to subserve the cause of truth: it may serve to dispel that halo with which Pantheism, in the eyes of many, is invested. There is, perhaps, no danger so imminent to Christianity, in our day, as that arising from Pantheism and the moral lethargy which follows in its course. There must, of necessity, come a confusion of moral ideas, when the Hegelian motto is adopted: "That which is, is that which is reasonable." But of the attractions of this scheme of the universal development of the Absolute, it is unnecessary to speak. It is the perversion of a truth, and one of the most glorious truths, viz. that the world is a revelation of God. There is, perhaps, no system more adapted to fascinate young and thoughtful minds; especially at an age when the impetuosity of passion chafes at the restraints of a strict morality. Indeed, were it not for the conscience, we might predict for the system an extensive sway among cultivated and imaginative minds among us. But this book of Feuerbach dispels the charming illusion with which it is enwrapped. For, in this "Essence of Christianity," we have the legitimate result of Pantheism, popularized. Brought from the clouds, its chosen and securest seat, down to the level of the common understanding, Pantheism is seen in its true character; and is found to be nothing more nor less than Atheism. Its essential degradation of all that mankind holds most sacred, its false assumptions, its strained and flippant explanations, tend to open the eyes to its corrupting influence. That this indirect tendency of the book may more than counterbalance the object it aims at, is our most earnest desire.

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