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F.C. Baur's Synthesis of Böhme and Hegel

Redefining Christian Theology as a Gnostic Philosophy of Religion

Corneliu C. Simuț

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a Gnostic Philosophy of Religion

By

Corneliu C. Simuț

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

To my wife, Ramona, and my children, Ezra and Lara

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To me, seeing this book in print marks a happy anniversary: a decade has passed since the publication of my first two books which were dedicated to my wife, Ramona, and my children, Ezra and Lara. Ten years later, Ramona, Ezra, and Lara are still my main *raisons d'écrire*, so I am grateful to have been offered the chance once again to dedicate a book to them for reminding me every day why I do what I do and what *mettre la main à la plume* really means to me.

Corneliu C. Simuț
September 8, 2014
Oradea, Romania

Introduction

This book was started with the average theology student in mind. In my fifteen years of teaching theology at undergraduate and postgraduate level, I have come to understand that, within most student quarters, the dominant image of Ferdinand Christian Baur is that of a theologian associated with a nontraditional perspective on the Bible—generally dubbed "liberal"—so his name is primarily connected with biblical studies. It has become evident to me that a significant number of students do not even realize that Baur was more than just a biblical theologian, let alone ask why he believed what he wrote in his numerous academic productions. His interest in philosophy and religion escapes most students interested in theology, so questions related to his understanding of these issues rarely surface during courses and seminars. Consequently, I began to write this book hoping that theology students would understand not only what lies beneath Baur's "liberal" (in the sense of nontraditional, because he did precede German theological liberalism) perspective on the Bible, but also get a sense of how his perspective on theology was shaped by a couple of his famous predecessors, most notably Jakob Böhme and G.W.F. Hegel, to whom Baur is greatly indebted for his intellectual development.

It should be said here that Böhme and Hegel are not the only figures who moulded Baur's understanding of religion in general and of Christian theology in particular. Friedrich Schelling and Friedrich Schleiermacher were also mentioned alongside Böhme and Hegel, but since in Baur's view Schelling and Schleiermacher did less than Hegel in minutely detailing the relationship between various forms of religion such as Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity—and in so doing, focusing exclusively on the reality of man's subjectivity—only Hegel (who dealt with God's objectivity as the absolute spirit in the concreteness of the natural world) and, through him, Böhme (who attempted to view God based on how the objective reality of nature works in its tangible materiality) will be investigated in this book.

Unfortunately though, once Böhme and Hegel got into the picture, the book gradually ceased to stay at the level of the average theology student. The rather difficult nature of the issues discussed by Hegel coupled with the notoriously ambiguous writings of Böhme turned my work into a book which goes beyond the level of a mere introduction. It is therefore very likely that it will be more appealing to established scholars in the field of philosophy of religion and especially to those who specialize in the German tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I do hope, however, that theology students will not find this book a discouraging exercise of academic reading because my

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intention was not to come forward with a new thesis or even with a new approach to either systematic theology or the philosophy of religion. Despite my failure to keep the book at the level of an introductory work, what I intended—and hopefully managed—to do in the end was to present a certain coordinate in Baur's thought which has not been investigated in academia and which has consequently remained somewhat obscure or even concealed to those interested in Baur's works. This is why this book presents a neglected and unfamiliar dimension of Baur's philosophy, and in doing so it seeks to replace the dominant perspective on Baur as a theologian concerned with reading the Bible in a nontraditional way with an image that presents him as a pivotal authority in the philosophy of religion.

To be clear from the start, I did not tackle Baur's understanding of biblical theology in any way whatsoever; what I did was to investigate how his general perspective on theology was influenced by Böhme and Hegel. Why Böhme and Hegel? Simply because Baur himself points to both, and a close analysis of how he understands their writings reveals how he came to shape his own perspective on theology. It is important to notice that the word "theology" refers to Christian theology, the very core of the Christian religion, which is the starting point of Baur's inquiry long before he delves into issues related to other religions, such as Judaism and Paganism as well as—to a certain degree—Islam. Although one cannot say with absolute certainty how Baur's study of Christian theology actually began and whether it was precedent or subsequent to his interest in other religions, it is fairly easy to notice that while he starts with Christian theology, his preoccupation with it is far from the "standard" approach of traditional theology. His nontraditional understanding of Christian theology led him to believe that Christianity is a mere religion among others and even if he may have believed in its superiority over other religions, such a conviction was not shaped theologically, but rather made up philosophically. It is here that Baur needs to be discussed in connection with Hegel and Böhme. While it is quite safe to say that Baur must have made his acquaintance first with Hegel (they were contemporaries and their lives did overlap) and only then with Böhme, it really does not matter who came first under Baur's careful scrutiny. It may be that Baur read Hegel first and, having been influenced by his thought, he then continued with Böhme, who only strengthened his already cemented Hegelian convictions. What is really important here is to understand that both Hegel and Böhme (or the other way around) had something to say to Baur, so he eventually learned from both how to redefine Christian theology as a philosophy of religion.

For the sake of keeping a certain chronology as fundamental for the argument of this book, I decided to start with the things Baur learned from Böhme and then move towards those he learned from Hegel. This choice is not exclusively chronological, but also conceptual because while Böhme is closer in time to traditional theology (and here I refer to the theology of the Protestant Reformation) and helped Baur reconsider some of the theological categories he worked with, Hegel is closer to Baur's nontraditional understanding of theology, so powerfully influenced by Hegel himself. Baur learned quite a number of things from Böhme, but I chose to focus on only three aspects—the idea of creation, the image of Lucifer, and the essential dualism of reality—which are extremely important to how he viewed theology. In fact, Böhme helped Baur get acquainted not only with traditional theological categories (some may like the word "doctrines" more), but also with a rather peculiar (specifically esoteric) perspective on them, which appears to have convinced Baur that Christian theology can be read in a key which is anything but traditional. The fact that Baur saw in Böhme a tendency to read Christian theology in a way which is not generally accepted (although Böhme himself seems to be quite traditional in his use of the Christian theological vocabulary) may have prompted him to see Christian theology not only as some sort of knowledge which is not always accessible to common people, but also as a particular manifestation of the reality of religion. This is why Baur sees Christian theology, and Christianity in general, as a religion which can be better explained by means of the idea of Gnosis.

The next step for Baur was Hegel, who not only strengthened his conviction that Christianity was a religion which should be understood as Gnosis, but also taught him that religion in general (Christianity included) must be read as a philosophy; thus one should not talk about Christian theology (or any theology for that matter), but rather about religious philosophy (regardless of whether this philosophy refers to Christianity or other world religion). In summary, while Böhme taught Baur to read Christian theology in a nonconventional way—so Böhme's traditionalism becomes, through the mediation of Hegel's philosophy, non-traditionalism in Baur—based on the idea of Gnosis which is clearly detached from how theology had been understood until the Protestant Reformation, Hegel convinced him that Christianity is just another world religion alongside Paganism, Judaism, and Islam, so his reading of theology should be primarily philosophical, not theological. This is why, under Hegel's influence, Baur divided Christian theology—which he saw as a Gnostic (which in fact means rational and dualistic) religious philosophy—in two distinctive periods: before Hegel, when Christian theology was read primarily in traditional terms (meaning that the absolute spirit of God was radically different from the limited spirit of man) and therefore is an "old philosophy of religion", and after Hegel, when Christian theology should be comprehended exclusively in nontraditional terms (meaning that the absolute spirit of God is not at all different from the limited spirit of man) to the point that a "new philosophy of religion" has been established. To be sure though, Baur learned from Böhme and Hegel not only to understand Christian theology as a philosophy of religion, but also to read it as a specifically Gnostic philosophy of religion.

The method I used is rather simple and consists of a detailed analysis of only a small cluster of primary sources. I started with Baur's *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* [*The Christian Gnosis or the Christian Religious Philosophy in Its Historical Development*] (Tübingen: Verlag Osiander, 1835), which led me to Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion. Nebst einer Schrift über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*, erster und zweiter Teil [*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. With a Work about the Proof of God's Being*, first and second volumes] (Berlin: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1840) and Böhme's *Aurora oder Morgenröte im Aufgang* [*Aurora or Dawn Breaking*] (Leipzig: Verlag von Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1832, originally published in 1612); I also worked with Böhme's *De Tribus Principiis oder Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens* [*Description of the Three Principles of the Divine Being*] (Leipzig: Verlag von Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1841, originally published in 1619).

While I have been unable to find English translations of Baur's *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Böhme's *Aurora oder Morgenröte im Aufgang* and *De Tribus Principiis oder Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens* can be read in English in William Law (ed.), *The Works of Jacob Behmen, the Teutonic Philosopher*, volume 1 (London: Richardson, 1794), quoted as Behmen, "Aurora", and "The Three Principles". Fortunately, Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion. Nebst einer Schrift über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*, erster und zweiter Teil, are available in variegated English translations, but one which can be found easily is E.B. Speirs (ed.), *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, together with a Work on the Proofs of the Existence of God* by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, translated by E.B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, 3 volumes (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), quoted as Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. I am fully aware that my choice of primary sources is rather restrictive, but I do believe in exegesis much more than I believe in synthesis, so I decided closely and analytically to investigate a wide range of explanations offered by Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, in an attempt to explain how Böhme and Hegel shaped Baur's understanding of Christian theology and convinced him to read it as a Gnostic religious philosophy.

A key methodological clarification is needed here. One must realize that my analysis refers mostly to the primary sources, so my entire argument is based on my own reading and understanding of the writing of Baur, Böhme, and Hegel; from this perspective, therefore, my book is primarily descriptive and not argumentative. In other words, while I work with the primary sources provided by Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, I attempt to reconstruct their arguments in a way which presents Baur as a meaningful contributor to the philosophy of religion, not as a key theologian, who follows in the footsteps of Böhme and Hegel. As a result, I do not engage—as it may be expected—in the standard academic criticism of either the primary sources of Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, or the vast array of secondary literature, contemporary or less so, dealing with their writings. I merely wanted to rebuild Baur's image as a philosopher of religion based on how he read Böhme and Hegel, so I kept as close to their writings as I could, while leaving aside scholarly debates either for another book or to other colleagues, philosophers and theologians alike. I must however confess my hope that—despite all its faults—this book will eventually stimulate new lines of research in systematic theology as well as in the philosophy of religion, either because of its heavy interaction with primary sources or even because of what some may perceive as an outrageous lack of critical engagement with secondary materials.

Nevertheless, I believe that for the time being reconstruction is more important than criticism, so presenting Baur as a philosopher of religion in line with Böhme and Hegel takes precedence over providing the readers with my own critical views of primary and secondary sources. One needs to remember that the content of the book as well as the texts it investigates are not only quite complex, but also annoyingly ambiguous; this is why my work attempts to turn the difficult, elaborate, and sophisticated ideas from Böhme and Hegel into a language which is characterized by clarity, accessibility, and simplicity based on my own understanding of the primary sources. Consequently, provided that the whole book is written based on my constant interaction with the primary sources of Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, one will notice that quotations are scarce to the point of being intentionally absent—specific selections of texts from the primary sources were made only when the need to illustrate a certain point was absolutely necessary. Since the goal of the book is to reconstruct Baur's image as a philosopher of religion and not to argue about the validity of such an enterprise, when primary sources are quoted the intention is not to assess them critically but rather to use them to present, demonstrate, and consolidate Baur's position as a religious philosopher in the tradition of Böhme and Hegel.

The secondary sources were treated the same way, so the references to the wide range of works about Baur, Böhme, and Hegel are not meant to be approached critically as supporting or dismissing what I believe about them, but rather to be indicative of certain aspects, issues, and ideas which are found in the primary sources and support my intention to recreate Baur as a philosopher of religion deeply rooted in the thought of Böhme and Hegel. While my list of secondary sources is obviously rather long—perhaps too long for the purposes of this book—and the experts in Baur, Böhme, and Hegel are considerably fewer than those who deal with them from a non-expert position, I did try to treat these books as documents which share the same value. After all, I am primarily a historian of the church and of doctrine, so before I approach documents in a critical way, I have to go through as many of them as I can, and this is exactly what I did in this book. Experts or not, the authors whom I used to point out that Baur was a philosopher of religion influenced by Böhme and Hegel as well as those who dealt exclusively with Böhme and Hegel even in so far as they were only mentioned in passing, were equally important to me, at least for the aim of this book. Undoubtedly, however, those very few experts in the field who deal with Baur, Böhme, and Hegel either together or separately, did leave a powerful impression on how I managed to perceive Hegel's modern religious philosophy and Böhme's premodern theological esotericism in conjunction with Baur's radical non-traditionalism.

Provided that I purposefully did not interact with them in a critical way but they nevertheless guided me during my journey through Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, a short list of highly authoritative experts in the field must be drafted because it is compulsory for anyone who ventures to delve into Western esotericism and religious philosophy. Thus, Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, as well as the intellectual contexts in which they lived and worked cannot be properly understood without Chyril O'Regan's inspiring "trilogy": *The Heterodox Hegel* (1994), *Gnostic Return in Modernity* (2001), and *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Boehme's Haunted Narrative* (2002). Other works which powerfully influenced my reading and understanding of Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, on the one hand, and of the notion of Gnosticism, on the other hand, were Christoph Markschies' extremely simple but illuminating *Gnosis. An Introduction* (2003), Stefan Rossbach's *Gnostic Wars: the Cold War in the Context of a History of Western Spirituality* (1999), Kristen Grimstad's *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann's* Doktor Faustus (2002), Glenn A. Magee's *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (2008), and David Brakke's *The Gnostics. Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (2010). Within the same context, two exquisite works deserve special attention for their incisive and comprehensive approach of still intensely debated issues like esotericism and Gnosticism: Michael A. William's intriguingly bold reconsideration of Gnosticism as philosophy in *Rethinking "Gnosticism". An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (1996) and Wouter J. Hannegraaff's masterfully crafted *Esotericism and the Academy. Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (2012), are must have for anyone who wishes to understand the alternative theologies and philosophies of Europe's esoteric thought.

Other significant books left an equally powerful imprint on my understanding of Baur, Böhme, and Hegel, as well as on how I eventually comprehended esotericism and Gnosticism. For instance, a key instrument which assisted me, a professionally trained theologian, in seeing Hegel in a much friendlier way were Andrew Shanks' *Hegel's Political Theology* (1991), *God and Modernity. A New and Better Way to Do Theology* (2000), *Faith and Honesty. The Essential Nature of Theology* (2005), as well as his more recent *Hegel and Religious Faith. Divided Brain, Atoning Spirit* (2011). At the same time, Hegel became more accessible to my theological mind through Quentin Lauer's pedagogical approach to Hegel's works in his *A Reading of Hegel's* Phenomenology of the Spirit (1976), *Essays in Hegelian Dialectic* (1977), and *Hegel's Concept of God* (1982). Insightful ideas about the context of Hegel's philosophy and modern theology in general were provided in two excellent books by Garry Dorrien: *The Word as True Myth. Interpreting Modern Theology* (1997), and *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit. The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology* (2012), which I found very helpful as I tried to understand Hegel through, but also without the lens of, theology. Within the very same category, I would include another cluster of books which helped me better understand Hegel and modern philosophy, namely William Desmond's works which I found superbly eye-opening: *Philosophy and Its Others. Ways of Being and Mind* (1990), *Hegel's God. A Counterfeit Double?* (2003), *Art, Origins, Otherness. Between Philosophy and Art* (2003), and *Is There a Sabbath for Thought? Between Religion and Philosophy* (2005).

The most challenging task for me by far was coming to terms with Böhme and his esoteric approach to theology. Since reading Böhme on his own did not help very much, my understanding of his exasperatingly ambiguous thought would have for ever remained a distant fantasy without the support I found in some truly exceptional books written by genuine masters in the field of esoteric philosophy. Thus, in addition to Wouter J. Hannegraaff's exquisite *Esotericism and the Academy*, which I have already mentioned, I succeeded in cracking the cemented crust of Böhme's cryptic thought by constantly using Antoine Faivre's *Access to Western Esotericism* (1994) and *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition. Studies in Western Esotericism* (2000), as well as Brian J. Gibbons' *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought. Behmenism and Its Development in England* (1996) and *Spirituality and the Occult. From the Renaissance to the Modern Age* (2001). Then, for the fine tuning phase, I resorted to another famous "trilogy", written this time by Andrew Weeks: *Boehme. An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (1991), *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein. A Literary and Intellectual History*

(1993), and *Valentin Weigel, 1533–1588. German Religious Dissenter, Speculative Theorist, and Advocate of Tolerance* (2000). The last monumental "trilogy" which tremendously backed my efforts to understand esoteric thinking was composed of Jeffrey B. Russell's attempts to unveil the complexities behind the notion of evil in his *Satan. The Early Christian Tradition* (1981), *Mephistopheles. The Devil in the Modern World* (1986), and *The Prince of Darkness. Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (1988). I concluded my journey into esotericism with a brilliant quintet composed by Arthur Versluis, a frontline scholar in the field of theosophy and hermetic philosophy: *Theosophia. Hidden Dimensions of Christianity* (1994), *Wisdom's Children. A Christian Esoteric Tradition* (1999), *Restoring Paradise. Western Esotericism, Literature, Art, and Consciousness* (2004), *Magic and Mysticism. An Introduction to Western Esotericism* (2007), and *The Secret of Western Sexual Mysticism. Sacred Practices and Spiritual Marriage* (2008).

Having clarified these vitally important methodological aspects and in line with the purpose of providing the reader with a simple, unsophisticated, and straightforward presentation of how I reconstruct Baur's image as a religious philosopher, and not as a biblical theologian, based on his connections with complex ideas from Böhme and Hegel, the way I organized this book is equally simple, plain, and direct, because it has two main parts and only five chapters. The first part focuses on what Baur learned from Böhme and it has three chapters: chapter 1 deals with how Baur understood Böhme's idea of creation, chapter 2 treats Baur's perspective on Böhme's image of Lucifer, and chapter 3 tackles the structure of the fundamental dualism of reality, especially with specific reference to the notion of Gnosis. The second part of the book investigates what Baur learned from Hegel and it has two chapters: chapter 4 offers details about how Baur regarded Hegel's theory about the relationship between spirit and matter while chapter 5 is an inquiry about Baur's perspective on Hegel's philosophy of religion.

The book ends with a rather ample concluding section, which is a synthesis that explains how Baur puts together Böhme's esoteric ideas about theology and Hegel's philosophical theories about religion. Thus, the reader is told how Baur views Christian theology as a Gnostic philosophy of religion which permanently manifested itself throughout history from its Jewish beginnings in first-century Palestine to its Hegelian reading in nineteenth-century Germany, which leads to at least two main conclusions. First, that Baur's traditional image of a biblical theologian who reads the Bible in a nontraditional way should no longer be seen as dominant and it should be replaced with, or rather reconstructed as a picture that presents him as a philosopher of religion whose main interest is to translate Christian theology into a Gnostic philosophy of religion under the influence of Hegel and, through him, of Böhme. Second, and certainly no less important, as a result of appropriating Hegel's complex ideas and implicitly Böhme's ambiguous thought, Baur succeeds in moving away from the traditional understanding of Gnosticism as belief in the radical separation of God and the world, God and humanity, and God and evil. Instead, he proposes a view which perceives Gnosticism as putting together God and the world, God and humanity, and God and evil. In other words, when it comes to assessing the relationship between God and creation as manifested in the reality of the world, humanity, and evil, a crucial and yet neglected aspect of Baur's approach to Gnosticism is revealed: while separation is undoubtedly cancelled, dualism is retained conceptually in order to highlight the mutual dependence—and not the conflicting nature—within the ontologically interpenetrating relationship between God and the world, God and man, God and evil.

PART 1

What did Baur Learn from Böhme?

⁂

CHAPTER 1

The Idea of Creation

The Creation of Creation

The first thing Baur learned from Böhme was the idea of creation, which speaks about nature and its predominant material character. For Böhme, the notion of creation seems to be very important since he mentions it in connection with both the devil and the human being.[1] This seems to imply that both the spiritual and the natural worlds are created, so there is an agent beyond both of them, and they are only the object of this agent's creative action. Böhme acknowledges—based on the material he finds in Scriptures—that the devil was originally a holy angel, while man was created good;[2] nevertheless, the observation of reality shows that all creatures bear within them a sort of aversion towards each other, which manifests itself in a wide variety of ways. Therefore, all creatures—and the implications can, at least theoretically, be extended beyond the boundaries of the natural world into the reality of the spiritual realm—"bite, beat, fight, and bruise" each other, so there is a constant state of enmity amongst them.[3] Böhme also points out that there is a manifest repulsion in every living creature; nevertheless, the bigger problem here is the fact that this repulsion not only manifests itself towards other creatures, but also towards the very self of every individual creature. In other words, creatures have within themselves a repulsion not only for other creatures, but also for their own selves. This means that every individual body—or entity for that matter—is at odds with itself, so it really wages a war against its very self.[4] The repulsion Böhme mentions here can be found both in the living and the

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[1] For an excellent discussion about creation, the devil, and the human being, see Martin Brecht (Hrsg.), *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 2. Band: Der Pietismus von siebzehnten bis zum frühen achzehnten Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1993), 211.

[2] The goodness of creation, including that of the devil and the human being, is linked with the notion of eternal light. See Hans Tesch, "Der Mystiker Jakob Böhme", 85–95, in Rainer Flasche, Erich Geldbach (Hrsg.), *Religionen, Geschichte, Oekumene. In Memorian Ernst Benz* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 87.

[3] For details about Böhme's conviction that the enmity between creatures originates in the Fall, see Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, reprinted 2001), 220.

[4] Evil is in every creature because demons lie within every creature, to the point that demons are not separated from human beings or their spirit; in fact, demons are the human spirit. See

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inanimate elements of creation, such as "stars, elements, earth, rocks, metals, in wood and grass", so the entire creation suffers from an inner aversion to its very self. To stress this reality even more, Böhme explains that the whole of created reality is tainted with poison, venom, and wickedness in all possible respects.[5] The state of wickedness is evident and manifest even when life and movement are no longer present in living entities; even more so, the inner repulsion of creation can be seen in colors, virtues, in any and every feeling, even in the state of nothingness,[6] which is the result of spiritual introspection.[7]

Böhme insists that man must contemplate all these things and once he does so, he will then realize that everything comes from God; the origin of all things, as well as the source of all feelings is the very being of God.[8] Man must understand that he was created by God and the spring of all his characteristics lies within God. In other words, evil belongs to the very essence of man's constitution,[9] in exactly the same way as good belongs to love and repulsion to joy. What Böhme seems to do here is provide his readers with an image which blends man's plurality of feelings with the purpose of showing that good and evil in man have their origin in the being of God himself.[10] The reality of man's being is the result of the act of creation which was initiated by God, and since man is created by God, it follows that the constitution of man resembles the being of God, so since evil is to be found in man, then it means that it can also be found in God.[11] In Böhme, this reasoning seems to reach the point of identification, at least concerning man's spiritual constitution: whatever man

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also Alexandre Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme. Étude sur les origines de la métaphysique allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 203, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 110.

[5] Compare Hans-Ulrich Wöhler, *Dialektik in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 223–224.

[6] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 559.

[7] Compare Robert E. Carter, "God and Nothingness", 1–21, in *Philosophy East and West* 59.1 (2009): 3.

[8] Böhme illustrates that the origin of feelings is the being of God by pointing to the action of touching. See Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul*, 194–195.

[9] For more details about the origins of evil in the human being in Böhme, see also Caroline Spurgeon, "William Law and the Mystics", 305–328, in Adolphus W. Ward, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Volume 6, Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 319.

[10] See Jane K. Brown, *Goethe's Faust. The German Tragedy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 69, n. 3.

[11] See T. Koetsier, "Arthur Schopenhauer and L.E.J. Brouwer: A Comparison", 569–594, in T. Koetsier and L. Bergmans (eds.), *Mathematics of the Divine. A Historical Study* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 584.

is deep within his innermost feelings represents a perfect copy of God's being. Böhme stresses that there is virtually no difference between man and God in this respect, namely referring to the actuality of their beings. As man searches deeper into this issue, he discovers that good and evil share the same source.[12]

Wrath, as well as love, have the "same mother"—to use Böhme's words—and it is interesting to notice his choice of words which juxtaposes the idea of motherhood to the notion of God's being. God is not only the "mother" of good and evil, but good and evil are the very same thing, since they make up the same unique reality.[13] According to Böhme, man must be aware of his own beginnings and once he knows his point of origin, then he must acknowledge it as such. There is a connection between man's natural life and God's supernatural existence and, even if this connection cannot be seen with one's naked eyes, it is nevertheless there and it must be recognized as such. Thus, while one cannot say that there is fire, bitterness, and acerbity in God—let alone air, water, or earth—one should see that they all come from God; he is the source of everything.[14] In very much the same way, one cannot say that there is death, hell fire, and sadness in God, but at the same time, one knows that they all come from God.[15] In Böhme's words:

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[12] Also check David S. Katz, "The Occult Bible: Hebraic Millenarianism in Eighteenth-Century England", 119–132, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, Volume 3: The Millenarian Turn. Millenarian Contexts of Science, Politics, and Everyday Anglo-American Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 128.

[13] Good and evil "grow" together, which is confirmed by the tree of good and evil pertaining to biblical imagery and symbolizing the moral law. See Nick Rawlinson, *William Blake's Comic Vision* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 187, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 65.

[14] See John Macquarrie, *Stubborn Theological Questions* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 71.

[15] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 1:4, 5, 8 (Baur only indicates 1:4 as the source of the quotation), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 559–560. It is interesting to notice that Baur intentionally excludes a phrase from Böhme's text which literally reads that "he (God) is one in his being and threefold in persons" ("er is einig im Wesen und dreifältig in Personen"), see Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 1:5. It is possible that this omission has to do with Baur's concern for the characteristics of the concept of God which can be described in a Trinitarian way rather than for the attributes of God's being as Trinitarian. Baur is more comfortable to speak about God as a concept, not as a triunity of persons, because the latter is not only a piece of traditional theology but also an option which goes against his modern approach of religion. This is why he extracts from Böhme only the texts which allow him to picture God in modern, rationalistic, and conceptual terms, not based on Böhme's traditional belief that God exists as a personal being.

> Now this cannot be expressed or described, or brought to the understanding by the tongue of man, for God hath no beginning. But I will set it do so as if he had a beginning that it might be understood what is in the first principle, whereby the difference between the first and second principle may be understood, and what God or Spirit is. Indeed there is no difference in God, only when it is enquired from whence evil and good proceed, it is to be known, what is the first and original fountain of anger, and also of love, since they both proceed from one and the same original, out of one mother, and are one thing. Thus we must speak after a creaturely manner, as if it took a beginning, that it might be brought to be understood. For it cannot be said that fire, bitterness or harshness, is in God, much less that air, water, and earth are in him, only it is plain that all things have proceeded out of that [original]. Neither can it be said, that death, hell-fire, or sorrowfulness is in God, but it is known that these things have come out of that [original].[16]

It should be stressed here, however, that while Böhme places the naturalism of man's life next to the supernaturalism of God's being and while he insists on the spiritual resemblances between the two realms, he nevertheless acknowledges the distinctive existence of each; in other words, for Böhme, there is the natural world of man on the one hand, and the supernatural world of God on the other, at least in theory. In reading Böhme though, Baur seems to imply that the very close identification between the naturalism of man's world and the supernaturalism of God's being does not favor the conclusion that the two realms are factually distinct, but rather ontologically identical, unlike Böhme who seems to allow for a certain similitude between man and God instead of their total collapse into each other.[17] This is to say that the naturalism of man's life is the same thing with the supernaturalism of God and vice versa, the supernatural existence of God should be translated in terms of man's natural life. To be even more precise, in Baur there seems to be no distinction whatsoever between God and man, between the divine being and the human being, between the absoluteness of God and the transitoriness of man.[18]

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[16] Jacob Behmen, "The Three Principles of the Divine Essence of the Eternal Dark, Light, and Temporary World, Showing What the Soul, the Image, and the Spirit of the Soul Are, as also What Angels, Heaven, and Paradise Are, How Adam Was before the Fall, in the Fall, and after the Fall, and What the Wrath of God, Sin, Death, the Devils, and Hell Are, How All Things Have Been, Now Are, and How They Shall Be at the Last", in William Law (ed.), *The Works of Jacob Behmen, the Teutonic Philosopher*, volume 1 (London: Richardson, 1794), 10.

[17] This is not to say that, in Böhme, God and man are distinct realities or even individualities; it only means that God and man can be similar facets of the same reality. Compare Terryl Givens, *When Souls Had Wings. Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 145.

Man has the duty—according to Böhme—to search for the origin of things, and in this respect he must investigate what the calls the "*prima materia*" (the first matter) of wickedness.[19] This seems very important for Böhme, since wickedness is to be found in all creatures.[20] The particularity of his thought, however, resides in the necessity that man should look for the origin of wickedness not only in creatures, but also in the very being of God himself.[21] Man must do this exercise of identifying the first matter of wickedness because, if there is one single particular thing residing in man, then the same thing is also to be found in God and—to be more precise—in his essence, because it was made according to God's Trinity.[22] At this point, Böhme explains that severity, bitterness, and fire are practically the first principle, the very spring of all things must be found in these particular three aspects which constitute the first principle. One can easily notice the connection Böhme makes between the idea of God's Trinity and the three aspects—severity, bitterness and fire—of the first principle.[23] It is now time for Böhme to come up with a definition of God, but according to this first principle, God should not be called God, but rather grimness, wrathfulness, and gravity. This automatically leads to another "Trinity", which is also the source of wickedness, namely painfulness, trembling, and burning. In Böhme, the triunity of pain, trembling, and burning—but also that of grimness, wrathfulness, and gravity—is strongly connected to the being of God, and particularly to the person of God the Father as part of the Trinity.[24] In the birth of all things, awfulness and severity are two distinct realities which characterize the reality of origin as they clearly exist in connection with acerbity, bitterness, and fire. Böhme admits that one cannot say that these aspects are God, but they do constitute the spring or the source which is to be found in God the Father.[25] In this respect, they do designate a wrathful and zealous, even arduous God. As far as Böhme is concerned, this is the first principle which defines both the being of God the Father and the reality of the world.[26] As Böhme puts it:

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[18] For Baur, man's awareness (of himself) coincides with God's spirit. See John K. Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1993), 80.

[19] See also Georg Biedermann, *Zur Vorgeschichte der klassischen deutchen Philosophie. Von der mittelalterlichen Mystik bis zum logischen Rationalismus* (Berlin: Epubli, 2011), 137.

[20] Compare Monika Fick, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Theosophie. Eine Interpretation des Romans *Die Elixiere des Teufels*", 105–126, in Theodor Berchem, Eckhard Heftrich, Volker Kapp, Franz Link, Kurt Müller, Alois Wolf (Hrsg.), *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch*, 36. Band (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1995), 121.

[21] For details about Böhme's view of God as the origin of evil and wickedness, see also Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Godhead and Nothing* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 73–74.

[22] An interesting discussion about the reality of evil in God, but also about how the Trinity should include Satan can be found in C.G. Jung, "Letter to Reverend David Cox, 25 September 1957", 183–190, in Edwared F. Edinger, *The New God-Image. A Study of Jung's Key Letters concerning the Evolution of the Western God-Image* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1996), 184.

[23] See also Weeks, *Boehme*, 109.

> Yet there is found in the original the most horrible and [fierce or] strong birth, the harshness, bitterness, and fire, of which we cannot say, that it is God, and yet it is the most inward first source of all, that is in God the Father, according to which, he calls himself, an angry, zealous [or jealous] God. And this source (…) is the first principle, and that is God the Father in his originality, out of which this world has its beginning.[27]

Böhme admits that in this first principle, one finds not only attitudes like awfulness, anxiety, and enmity, but also the infernal abyss which is ruled over by Lucifer. It seems that, in Böhme, the particular idea of God slowly turns into the more general notion of divine being, since God now appears to include the reality of Lucifer, or the devil, with his corresponding abyssal feelings of awfulness, anxiety, and enmity.[28] Baur believes that Böhme founded this particular insight on the reality of physical nature, which contains in itself but also discloses a dual principle that is authenticated by the light of nature. According to this principle, man's life is a mixture of two distinct attitudes, which Baur sees in Böhme's presentation: on the one hand, anger and evil, and on the other, love and gentleness. Consequently, in Böhme, there is a mixture of opposing feelings in the very nature of man's life, a duality of contrary realities which makes man's existence possible.[29] Man's life, however, is closely connected with natural existence in general, so Böhme believes that natural law in its entirety cannot be conceived without a duality of principles and powers. This conviction leads him to conclude that the very notion of God cannot be properly defined without this duality of principles as well as without the opposition between good and evil. Actually, for Böhme, the notion of God can only be explained as living based on this duality of principles which includes the antagonism between good and evil.[30]

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[24] Compare John P. Dourley, "A Critical Evaluation of Paul Tillich's Appropriation of Jakob Boehme", 191–206, in Gert Hummel, Doris Lax (eds.), *Mystisches Erbe in Tillichs philosophischer Theologie/Mystical Heritage in Tillich's Philosophical Theology. Beiträge des VIII. Interationalen Paul-Tillich-Symposiums Frankfurt/Main 2000. Proceedings of the Eighth International Paul Tillich Symposium Frankfurt/Main 2000* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2000), 197.

[25] Compare Montgomery, *The Visionary D.H. Lawrence*, 173.

[26] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:45, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 560.

[27] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 28.

[28] See also Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish and Christian Mysticism. An Introduction* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1994), 139.

The idea of life seems to be crucial for Böhme, because it takes precedence over the concept of will. This is evident in his question as to whether the soul should not stay in one's will, but rather in vain life, like God himself. In other words, man should conceive his own existence not based on one's will, but on the reality of self-sufficient life, as in God's case. This is to say that, if God's life is self-sufficient, then man's life is self-sufficient as well. For Böhme, this is the true purpose, foundation, and knowledge of man's life, which must be aware of the reality of the two contrary principles: eternity and temporality, infinity and finitude, which are connected to corruption or deterioration, described by Böhme as the third principle:[31]

> For you see, feel, and find, that all these must yet have a higher root from whence they proceed, which is not visible, but hidden; especially if you look upon the starry heaven which endures thus unchangeably; therefore you ought to consider from whence it is proceeded, and how it subsists thus, and is not corrupted, nor rises up above, nor falls down beneath, though indeed there is neither above nor beneath there. Now if you consider what preserves all thus, and whence it is, then you find the eternal birth that has no beginning, and your find the original of the eternal principle, the eternal indissoluble band, and then, secondly, you see the separation, in that the material world, with the stars and elements, are out of the first principle, which contains the outward and third principle in it; for you find in the elementary kingdom or dominion, a cause in every thing, wherefore it is, generates, and moves as it does, but you find not the first cause, from whence it is so. There are therefore two several

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[29] The dualism of man's being is a reflection of the dualism of the divine being. See Turner, *History of Philosophy*, Volume 1, 392.

[30] See Peter J.A.N. Rietbergen, *Europe. A Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 1998), 304.

[31] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:47, and 4:25, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 560–561.

> principles, for you find in the visible things a corruptibility, and perceive that they must have a beginning, because they have an end.[32]

A genuine concern for the relationship between soul (or mind) and will is evident in Böhme.[33] If the soul does not consist solely of a will, but of individual, self-sufficient life, then it follows that the soul, or the mind—or even, by extension, reason—cannot be equated with the will, but rather with life itself. Another concern for Böhme is the connection between the will and the being, because it seems that the will can only exists in one being. If indeed this is the case and the will exists only in a being, then it means that the soul (mind, or reason) has a quality which it bestows upon the will, so the soul (mind, or reason) influences the will.[34] Böhme's main interest here seems to be his preoccupation to establish the precedence of the soul (mind, or reason) over the will. So it is the soul (mind, or reason) which comes first, then the will. If, however, the will took precedence over the being, then it would mean that the soul (mind, or reason) would share with the will the quality of being essentially immutable and unchanging. It appears that Böhme disapproves of the idea of immutability, because this renders both the soul (mind, or reason) and the will incapable of moving forward.[35] The only possibility for the soul (mind, or reason) and the will to take a step forward and move towards something else is to exist within a being, because the being seems to be ontologically changing and mutable, at least in Böhme's thought. So, the soul (mind, or reason) does not lie exclusively within the will, but within a being, because if this were not the case, then the soul (mind, or reason), as well as the will, would be immutable and unchanging. If the soul (mind, or reason) and the will were immutable, then everything would be immutable; they would not constitute a being, but only a thing, which would also be immutable and would be totally unable to move outside its own boundaries. Such a thing would lack all the movable and changing qualities of a being, so it would totally lack any trace of joy, knowledge, art, science, and wisdom. It would be only an unchanging thing equal to nothing, since no reason as well as no will for something would be there within itself; such an immovable thing, devoid of reason and will, would be only one thing, not a being.[36]

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[32] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 25.

[33] For more on the complex relationship between the soul and the will in Böhme, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine. A Western Religious History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 230.

[34] More details about how the mind works within the being (divine or human), see Losonsky, *Enlightenment and Action from Descartes to Kant*, 127–128.

[35] This is proved by the idea of externalization because God, who is the soul of creation, wants to express himself within nature in a spiritual way. See Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution. The History of an Idea*, revised edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 105.

If this is the case, then one cannot say that the totality of God can be restricted to one will and one being. A distinction has to be made here, in the sense that although the first principle cannot be said to be God—and it is not God, but still it is his being or essence—God's light and heart are always born from eternity and they make up one being, like the body and soul in human beings. Consequently, in Böhme, the being of God is essentially the light and heart of God, very much the same way the body and soul constitute the human being.[37] It appears that, as far as Böhme is concerned, the idea of light stands for that of reason, while the notion of heart speaks of feelings. One thing is sure though, namely that the will cannot exist without either reason or feeling. God is primarily reason and feeling, then he is also will. This is why Böhme explains that if there were not the eternal soul (mind, or reason), from which the eternal will springs forth, there would be no God.[38]

So, God is the eternal soul (mind, or reason) which gives birth to the eternal will. To be more precise, the sequence is the following: first, there was the eternal soul (mind, or reason), which gave birth to the eternal will, and the eternal will gave birth to the eternal heart of God. Then, the heart of God gave birth to light, light gave birth to art, and art gave birth to the spirit. This is God, for Böhme, and it is this almighty God which has an unchanging will, which somehow finds itself in a constant process of generation indicating that God's unchangeability must leave some room for (or perhaps incorporate) a certain degree of movement as *sine qua non* for the very essence of God himself:[39]

> Therefore now if the eternal mind were not, out of which the eternal will goes forth, then there would be no God. But now therefore there is an eternal mind, which generates the eternal will, and the eternal will, generates the eternal heart of God, and the heart generates the light, and the

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[36] In Böhme, however, nothing is immutable. Everything can change, including divinity or the divine being. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 433, n. 101.

[37] Compare Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

[38] Compare, for more details about Böhme view of the "eternal soul" and God, Marie-Elise Zovko, *Natur und Gott. Das wirkungsgeschichtliche Verhältnis Schellings und Baaders* (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen und Neumann, 1996), 149.

[39] See Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:34, 35, 37 and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 561.

> light the virtue, and the virtue the spirit, and this is the almighty God, which is one unchangeable will. For if the mind did not generate the will, then the will would also not generate the heart, and all would be a nothing. But seeing now that he mind thus generates the will, and the will the heart, and the heart the light, and the light the virtue, and the virtue the spirit, therefore now the spirit again generates the mind, for it has the virtue, and the virtue is the heart, and it is an indissoluble band.[40]

This will, however, is caught between reason and feeling, between art and spirit, so God is a being that incorporates reason, will, and feelings, in a way which establishes the precedence of reason over anything else in God. So reason reigns supreme over will, feeling, spirit, and anything else for that matter. To draw the line, it seems that the image of God in Böhme is fashioned if not according to, at least in connection with the image of the human being, so Böhme appears to project his understanding of the human being on the picture he drafts for God. This is why, in his thought, God looks like a human being,[41] but as he is not said to be a human being, he can be described as a divine being which should be seen in an orderly fashion.

The Hierarchy of Being

In Böhme, the reality of the Godhead[42] is ordained according to a certain hierarchy, in the sense that some aspects tend to be more important than others. For instance, the reality of God's Trinity is the highest amongst all aspects pertaining to divinity; it is like the upper class in human society. The reality of the Trinity is so crucially important for God that he seems to have chose to create angels and man following the Trinitarian pattern.[43] As far as Böhme is concerned—and Baur does not appear to disagree with him in any way here—God's Trinity enjoys the highest primacy within God's realm and it is based on this reality that he decided to create three ruling angels (or archangels).[44] The three archangels, however, seem to be connected more with God's created nature, rather than with the world of God's uncreated reality although they were created following the pattern of God's Trinity. To be sure, Baur notices that, in Böhme, the three archangels rule over angelic hosts or armies, which are part of the natural order of creation.[45]

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[40] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 72.

[41] This means that maleness and femaleness are both included in the divine being. See Warren Stevenson, *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1996), 16.

[42] The term which most commonly describes the Godhead in Böhme is *Ungrund*, the non-ground, the abyss. See Stefan Rossbach, "The Impact of 'Exile' on Thought: Plotinus, Derrida, and Gnosticism", 27–52, in *History of the Human Sciences* 20.4 (2007): 47.

[43] In Böhme, the order is this (from the most to the least important): Trinity—angels—man, but all were created as the result of the Word, which masters the power of sound as feature of the divine Godhead. See Arthur Versluis, *Restoring Paradise. Western Esotericism, Literature, Art, and Consciousness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 70.

Thus, there are three "natural" lords or archangels, each ruling over his own army, and this is how the world of angels seems to be arranged by God's creative action. The three archangels appear to be in a very close relationship with God, their creator, at least from the standpoint of the initial order of creation. In order to illustrate this powerful link between God and the three archangels, Böhme uses the analogy of the body and the soul. The three archangels, therefore, are related to God the very same way the body is interwoven with the soul, so they must have spiritual bodies which resemble human bodies since they are created beings according to the pattern of God's Trinity:[46]

> As the Deity in its being is threefold, in that the exit out of the seven spirits of God shows and generates itself as threefold, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, wherein the whole divine power consists, and whatsoever is therein; and they are the three persons in the deity, and yet are not a divided being, but in one another as one, so also when God moved himself, and created the angels, there came to the three special angels out of the best kernel of nature, out of the being of the ternary in the nature of God, and in such power, authority, and might (...). Now the Angels also have such bodies, but more dry and close compacted or incorporated together, and their body also is the kernel of, or out of nature, even the best or fairest splendor and brightness of, or out of nature (...). Antiquity has represented the angels in pictures like men with wings, but they have *no need* of any wings, yet they have hands and feet as men have, but after a heavenly manner and kind.[47]

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[44] See Franz Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme* (London: Kegan Paul, 1891), 112.

[45] More details in Weeks, *Boehme*, 80.

[46] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:107, 110, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568.

[47] Jacob Behmen, "Aurora: the Day-Spring, or Dawning of the Day in the East, or Morning-Redness in the Rising of the Sun, That Is the Root or Mother of Philosophy, Astrology, and Theology from the True Ground or a Description of Nature", in William Law (ed.), *The*

The three archangels are Michael, Lucifer, and Uriel; all three are given a brief description by Böhme, and one can easily notice how God's Trinity is compared with the three archangels.[48] Thus, the first archangel, Michael, is said to be God's power or might, so he is clearly compared with God the Father.[49] According to Böhme, Michael was created out of the seven spirits of God as their very essence. Baur notices that Michael seems to have been put together as a created body by means of the seven spirits of God, whose essence he was meant to be. Consequently, Michael represents God the Father in the Trinity of archangels.[50] These are Böhme's words:[51]

> Michael signifies the great strength or power of God, and bears the name operatively, actually, and in deed, for he incorporated or consolidated together out of the seven qualifying or fountain spirits, as out of the kernel or seed of them, and stands here now as in the stead of God the Father.[52]

There is clearly a distinction between God's Trinity and that of the archangels, in the sense that God created the archangels and not the other way around. Nevertheless, by comparing God's Trinity with the archangels' Trinity, Böhme seems to be more than willing to incorporate creation into God's realm and vice versa.[53] At this point, however, no other details are offered, so the only aspect which saliently emerges from this particular comparison is the reality of power—a dominant aspect both in God's Trinity and in that of the archangels.

As Michael was created according to the quality, image, and, character of God the Father, the same way another archangel was shaped following the pattern of the Son's divine person.[54] His name is Lucifer and he is the second archangel in Böhme's Trinitarian hierarchy of angels. Böhme underlines from the start—even before sketching his main characteristics—that Lucifer is the

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Works of Jacob Behmen, the Teutonic Philosopher, volume 1 (London: Richardson, 1794), 113–114.

[48] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 53, and Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Angels*, 73.

[49] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:100, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568.

[50] See Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 112.

[51] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:86, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568.

[52] Behmen, "Aurora", 114.

[53] In this respect, God's externalization is combined with a process of corporealization and sensualization, whereby the spirit (God's spirit) takes sensuous form. See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 43.

[54] See Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 150.

archangel who was cast away from God's light.[55] Despite this most fundamental gulf between himself and God, Lucifer was initially created according to quality, image, and beauty of God the Son. Having been determined to exist according to the image of God the Son, Lucifer was meant to love him, very much as a "loving son" respects his father:[56]

> As Michael is created according to the quality, manner, and property of God the Father, so was Lucifer created according to the quality, condition, and beauty of God the Son, and was bound to and united with him in Love, as a dear son or heart, and his heart also stood in the center of light, as if the had been God himself, and his beauty or brightness transcended all.[57]

Despite his exquisite qualities, Lucifer ended up being cast away from the presence of God the Father, and since Böhme does not come up with any further details at this point about why Lucifer is the cast away archangel, so that he no longer benefits from God's light, one may conclude that the reality of creation was not altogether perfect. Furthermore, as the connection between creation and God is so powerful in Böhme, one can even claim that imperfection was somehow a reality of God's realm, specifically because of Lucifer,[58] who was "expelled out of the Light of God".[59] One thing is clear however, namely that while Böhme mentions beauty, quality, character, power, love, and many other aspects as fundamental to God and his realm, perfection is not listed among them.[60]

Concerning Lucifer's initial position given by his creation, Böhme underlines the fact that he was very close to God, and especially to God the Son. To illustrate this conviction, Böhme mentions that Lucifer was created with a heart, and this heart stood in the very center (*centrum*) of light, as if he had been God himself.[61] Given that his resemblance to God the Son was almost total, Lucifer was endowed with extreme beauty; according to Böhme, Lucifer's beauty was so close to perfection that it surpassed all other forms of beauty, and this was possible because his origin lay in God himself, namely in God the Son.[62] At this point, Böhme shows again the most fundamental connection between God and his angelic creation in the sense that the unity between the two realms—God's uncreated reality and the created reality of the archangels—was meant to be perfect. God the Father and God the Son have already been in what can be called a perfect binding; this, however, was initially intended for the archangels as well, so Michael and Lucifer were made by God with the specific purpose of being connected to one another by the strongest love, a connection so powerful that points to the relationship between the body and the soul:[63]

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[55] Compare Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry. A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947, reprinted 1990), 153.

[56] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:101. Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568.

[57] Behmen, "Aurora", 116.

[58] This is a Gnostic feature, mainly because Lucifer becomes the "archetype of the imperfect demiurge". See, for details, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Lucifer and Prometheus. A Study of Milton's Satan*, with an introduction by C.G. Jung (London: Routledge, 1952, reprinted 2001), xi.

[59] See Behmen, "Aurora", 116.

[60] Because of Lucifer, the whole creation is characterized by imperfection. See also Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 23.

> Now as God the Father is bound and united in great love with his Son, so was king Lucifer also bound with king Michael in great love, as one heart or one God, for the fountain or wellspring of the Son of God has reached even into the heart of Lucifer. Only that the light which he had in his body, he had for his own propriety, and while it shone with or agreeable to the light of the Son of God, which was externally without or distinct from him, they both qualified, incorporate, and united together as one thing, thought they were two, yet they were bound or united together, as body and soul. And as the light of God reigns in all the powers of the Father, so he also reigned in all his angels, as mighty king of God, who wore on his head the fairest crown of heaven.[64]

This observation is important for Böhme because the idea and the subsequent reality of love is not only the connection between the persons of the Trinity—thus not only working with God or within the Godhead—but also between God's individual creatures. Love is what makes the three persons of God one single divine reality; the very same way love was intended to turn God's creatures into one single loving creation. There is one God despite the three persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the archangels, as God's creatures, were meant to be one single heart characterized by one single love.[65] At the same time though, the reality of love was not meant to work exclusively within the Godhead on the one hand, and within creation on the other. Love exists in God and in creation simultaneously, but it should also bridge the two ontologically different realms; this is why Böhme writes that the love of God the Son reached to Lucifer's heart, so there is a transfer of love from the realm of God's uncreated world to the sphere of the archangels' created reality. Thus, love seems to be the way according to which God thought that the world should work; in other words, love is the right way whereby creation functions following the pattern of God's uncreated existence. The idea of rectitude and correctness is therefore entailed by the reality of love and vice versa, namely love displays the right way to govern the world.[66]

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[61] For a competent discussion about the Gnostic association between Lucifer and light, which points to Böhme and Goethe, see Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Religion after Religion. Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 210.

[62] Hegel believed that, in Böhme, beauty was the factor which eventually caused Lucifer's fall. See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 143.

[63] See Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:101, 105, 106. Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568. More details about Böhme's view of love as a quality which was placed in angels, see Versluis, *Wisdom's* Children, 148.

[64] Behmen, "Aurora", 116.

This is revealed by the person of the third archangel, whose name is Uriel. The very meaning of Uriel's name is "God the Holy Spirit",[67] so—at least according to Böhme—God's spirituality is not only a divine reality, but it is also a reflection of God's love in his created world.[68] Böhme explains that Uriel was created in close connection with the light, in the sense that he is like a flash of light or even like lightning.[69] Uriel is a sort of an outlet of light, a light which propagates outside itself, and this is why he was fashioned according to the person of the Holy Spirit who acts as the unifying reality of the Trinity:[70]

> This gracious, amiable, blessed prince and king has his name from the light, or from the flash or going forth of the light, which signifies rightly God the Holy Spirit. For as the Holy Ghost goes forth from the light, and forms, figures, and images all, and reigns in all, such also is the power, and gracious, amiable blessedness or a cherub, who is the king and heart of all his angels, that is when his angels do but behold him, they are all then affected and touched with the will of their king.[71]

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[65] See also Kornerg Greenberg, *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions*, Volume 1, 484.

[66] Compare O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 78.

[67] There is also another meaning attached to Uriel's name, which is "God is my light" or "God is my illumination". See Patrick J. Keane, *Emerson, Romanticism, and Intuitive Reason. The Transatlantic "Light of All Our Day"* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 335.

[68] See also Harmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 113.

[69] See Hunt, *An Essay on Pantheism*, 186.

[70] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:108–110. Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568.

[71] Behmen, "Aurora", 116–117.

The three archangels speak not only of God's love, but also of the love which should characterize his creatures. Love, however, goes hand in hand with happiness and triumph, which are all illustrated by Böhme through the plastic imagery of the seven spirits of God in the middle of which God the Son emerges as the light (or lightning) of life. Love, happiness, and triumph bear witness to God's Trinity, but also to the Trinitarian constitutions of the archangels.[72] God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were not only a distant uncreated reality for the three archangels; in Böhme, God as Trinity existed in the very hearts of the archangels, which was a guarantee of the fact that all the heavenly hosts experienced the reality of love, happiness, and triumph. This is another indication of Böhme's attempt to connect divinity with creation since both realms know the meaning of love, happiness, and triumph. The Godhead and creation or—in Böhme's words—"the wonderful and beautiful construction of heavens" share love, happiness, and triumph as a demonstration that divinity and creation cannot be explained—nor can they exist—one without the other.[73] God and creation coexist; the traditionally absolute being of God is therefore mingled with the finite existence of created beings.

From Absoluteness to Finitude

Having presented Böhme's image of the Trinity with its corresponding connection between divinity and creation, Baur proceeds with the conclusion that there is an evident parallel between Böhme's theological system and the Gnostics' understanding of the world.[74] First, Baur notices that Böhme's presentation of the seven spirits of God and the realm of the archangels not only speaks about the eternal Trinitarian constitution of the divine being, but also points to the fact that concepts such as spirit, light, and kingdom—so special to Böhme—have a clear position within his theological system as well as a particular meaning. As far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's idea of God's Trinity and the Trinitarian constitution of the archangels' world can and should be compared with the Gnostics' philosophical system and its realm of aeons, which is characterized by *pleroma*, especially when notions like "the seven spirits" or solidity associated with what is nowadays known to be the gaseous constitution of clouds are used by Böhme to present the world of angels:[75]

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[72] The principle of love lies at the basis of everything: God, angels, and the world. Also read Apetrei, *Women, Feminism, and Religion in Early Enlightenment England*, 193.

[73] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:99, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 568–569.

[74] Compare John Glyndwr Harris, *Gnosticism. Beliefs and Practices* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), 54.

> The whole nature of the heaven stands in the seven qualifying or fountain spirits, and in the seventh consists nature or the apprehensibility of all the qualities. This now is the very lightsome and solid as a cloud, but very transparent and shining, like a crystalline sea, so that a man can see through and through it all, yet the whole depth upward and downward is wholly thus. Now the angels also have such bodies, but more dry and close compact or incorporated together, and their body also is the kernel of, or out of nature, even the best or fairest splendor and brightness of, or out of nature. Now upon the seventh spirit of God their foot does stay, which is solid like a cloud, and clear and bright as a crystalline sea, wherein they walk upward and downward, which way soever they please. For their agility and activity is as swift as the divine power itself is, yet one angel is more swift than another, and that answerably according to their quality.[76]

To be sure, Böhme's Trinity seems to be the Gnostics' *pleroma*,[77] while God and the archangels can be compared with the Gnostic perspective on reality, which is presented in a language which resembles the Gnostic idea of aeons:[78]

> As the deity in its being is threefold, in that the exit out of the seven spirits of God shows and generates itself as threefold, viz. Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God, wherein the whole divine power consists, and whatsoever is therein, and they are the three persons in the deity, and yet are not a divided being, but in one another as one, so also when God moved himself, and created the angels, there came to be three special angels out of the best kernel of nature, out of the being of the ternary in the nature of God, and in such power, authority, and might, as the ternary in the seven

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[75] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:79–81. See also J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, reprinted 1971), 300.

[76] Behmen, "Aurora", 114.

[77] A similar approach can be see in Samuel Taylor Coleridge. See Nicholas Reid, *Coleridge, Form and Symbol. Or the Ascertaining Vision* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 145–146.

[78] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:72. An excellent study about the theosophical reading of cosmology in Gnosticism, which alludes to Böhme, can be found in Dan Merkur, *Gnosis. An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 151.

> spirits of God has, for the ternary of God rises up in the seven spirits of God, and is again the life and heart of all the seven spirits.[79]

Thus, according to Baur, the development of Böhme's theological system seems to be based on these ideas, which have specific meanings to the point that Böhme's Trinity, God, and archangels can easily be compared with the Gnostics' world of aeons.[80] What Baur intends to do here is place Böhme in the line of the development of Gnosticism, so that what has been perceived as Christian Protestant mysticism should be understood as traditional Gnosticism. Baur is determined to compare Böhme's theological perspective with the Gnostics' philosophical system because of his conviction that the notion of the transition from the ideal world of God to the real world of humanity can be found in both.[81]

In other words, as far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's God, Trinity, and archangels speak of the ideal world of divinity, very much like the Gnostics' concept of aeons, which exist above the reality of the world. This is why Baur appears to be convinced that in both Böhme and the Gnostics there is a transition not only from the ideal world of God to the real world of men, but also from the notion of absoluteness to the idea of transitoriness or from eternity to finitude.[82] This particular conviction prompts Baur to advance the idea that both Böhme's theological system and the Gnostics' philosophical perspective share the same view of reality, which is certain and concrete. This is to say—at least based on Baur's understanding of Böhme—that the latter's presentation of the world of God's spirits has no spiritual connotations, but is rather a concrete vision of the world.[83]

This is very important for Baur because it deciphers the code in which he reads Böhme and, by extension, traditional theology in general which understands the realm of God in spiritual terms. For Baur, however, the world of God and angels should not be understood as spiritual, but rather as a particular way of presenting the concrete world of creation and humanity.[84] The transfer from absoluteness to finitude is crucial for Baur, because he appears to believe that Böhme promotes not only a theoretical postulation of the absolute—which is actually the Trinitarian realm of God and angels—but also the factual cancellation thereof. In other words, reality—or ontological reality, which is the only reality that exists in objective terms—is not defined by the realm of God, but rather by the world of creation and humanity, so in Böhme materiality defines spirituality:[85]

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[79] Behmen, "Aurora", 113.

[80] Such an approach places Böhme among the Gnostics, alongside Goethe and Hegel. See Manon de Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation. A Reassessment of Vladimir Solov'ëv's Views on History and His Social Commitment* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 248, n. 138.

[81] See also Robert S. Hartman, *The Knowledge of Good. Critique of Axiological Reason* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 226, and Grimstad, *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann's* Doktor Faustus, 44.

[82] Compare Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 120.

[83] This particular understanding is based on the transition from the absolute to concrete reality, which is seen not only in Böhme, but also on Schelling and von Baader. See Tom Rockmore, *Irrationalism. Lukács and the Marxist View of Reason* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992), 67–68.

> The stars signify or denote the angels, for as the stars must continue unaltered till the end of this time, so the angels also in the eternal time of heaven must remain unaltered for ever. The elements signify or denote the wonderful proportion, variety, change, and alteration of the form and position of heaven, for as the deep between the stars and earth always alter and change in their form, suddenly it is fair, bright, and light, suddenly it is lowery and dark, now wind, then rain, now snow, suddenly the deep is blue or azure, suddenly greenish, by and by whitish, then suddenly again dusky (…). The earth signifies or denotes the heavenly nature, or the seventh spirit of nature, in which the ideas, or images, forms and colors rise up. And the birds or fowls, fishes and beasts, signify or denote the several forms or shapes of figures in heaven.[86]

Thus, according to Baur, Böhme not only speaks of the transfer from divinity to humanity regarding his understanding of the world, but also—and ultimately—about the presentation of creation and this world, the realm of humanity, history, and nature, as the only existing reality.[87] The realm of God, which speaks of absolute values, is no longer understood in objective terms; the world of God, Trinity, and angels is real, but not objectively. The realm of

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[84] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 569.

[85] In Böhme, the highlighting of reality as creation and humanity is performed by means of concepts such as virginity and androgyny, which acquire evident spiritual connotations. See Bonnie Gaarden, *The Christian Goddess. Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of George MacDonald* (Lanham, MD: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), 119.

[86] Behmen, "Aurora", 118.

[87] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:123, 124, 126. See also Michel Chaouli, "1600. Signatures of Divinity", 265–269, in David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (eds.), *A New History of German Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 267.

God is real exclusively in subjective terms, namely in the sense that it defines the concrete realm of creation, humanity, history, and nature by adding spiritual connotations to it. Consequently, the world of God is nothing but the totality of the subjective and spiritual aspects which define the objective and physical reality of history.[88]

It is interesting to see how Baur understands Böhme's method whereby he made the transfer from absoluteness to finitude (from abstractness to concreteness) and then from realm of God to the world of humanity in such a way that the former became a mere spiritual feature of the latter. Thus, Baur explains that Böhme used two concepts to implement the transition from absoluteness to finitude, namely the idea of the fall[89] and the originating quality of principles.[90] Baur notices that, concerning the idea of the originating quality of principles, Böhme comes very close to Manichaeism although he differs from it in placing at least one of the principles in the very essence of God, which means that in Manichaeistic thought both principles are considered to exist outside God's being.[91] Even if Baur does not specify which principles he has in mind, one may easily infer that they are absoluteness and finitude or, in other words, the spirits of God and the reality of creation. This means that, as far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's intention was to equalize the realm of God with that of humanity, so that the reality of history could be explained by means of God's features, but also the other way around whereby we understand God in terms of humanity. This particular equalization of the two principles, divinity and humanity, is intended to help Böhme explain the problem of evil.[92]

Consequently, by placing divinity humanity at the same level, Böhme manages—in Baur's understanding—to provide us with a perspective on evil which is based on the conviction that the foundation and origin of evil can be connected with God while God still cannot be considered the author of evil.

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[88] According to Jean Hyppolite, for Böhme, God is a *microtheos*; in other words, God is the reality of a person, the source of self-knowledge, it is what Hegel calls the "absolute self" or "absolute spirit". Also check Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, 542–543.

[89] For more details about the fall in Böhme, see Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 127.

[90] The idea of quality speaks about the duality of principles. See, for instance, Jon M. Berry, "The Alchemical Regeneration of Souls in Strindberg's *To Damascus, III*", 57–68, in Poul Houe, Sven Hakon Rossel, and Göran Stockenström (eds.), *August Strindberg and the Other. New Critical Approaches* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 61.

[91] See also Grimstad, *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann's* Doktor Faustus, 42.

[92] Compare Cavendish, *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic, and Folk Belief*, 258.

In other words, Baur seems to want Böhme to say that the reality of evil can be explained by resorting to the being of God, but the connection between God and evil is not intentional, at least not as far as God is concerned. To be sure, evil can be found in God since both God and creation are situated at the same level, but this does not imply that God's intention in crafting creation was somehow to insert evil into it.[93] Evil exists in the world—and the idea of the fall confirms it—but in Böhme this has nothing to do with God in the sense that he reportedly had both purposefully in mind. At this point, Baur concedes that Böhme promotes the traditional Christian dogma of Lucifer's fall, which turned God's archangel into what was later known as the devil.[94] Lucifer was one of the three archangels, so in this sense he was God's creation, as Böhme clearly points out:[95]

> But this I must mention here that Lucifer, the king, was incorporated out of his whole kingdom, as the heart of the whole place or room thereof, so far as his whole angelical host or army reached when it was created, and so far as that circumference or circle, region or quarter reached, wherein he and his angels became a creature, and which God before the time of creation had inclosed or concluded as a room or space for a kingdom, whose circuit or extent comprehends heaven and this world, as also the deep of the earth, and the whole circle, sphere, or circumference of this whole world, of the heavens and stars.[96]

At the same time, one can say that he was also part of God but only because his angelic and creaturely power originated in God's divine power.[97] This is why it can be argued that the reality of evil, closely associated with Lucifer, was both external to God (because Lucifer initiated it, not God) and internal to the reality of divinity (as Lucifer's very being was crafted according to the spirits of God). Nevertheless, God himself cannot be said to have been the initiator of evil because he did not purposefully create Lucifer with a bad inclination for evil. What Lucifer did on his own pertains to his own being, but it is important to notice here that Böhme's equalization of divinity with creation allows for the existence of evil in the very being of God—since God created Lucifer who fell and thus "created" evil—without having God as the author of evil.[98]

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[93] More details about the connection between God and evil in Böhme, see Brook Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good. Omnicentrism Intersubjectivity, and Value in Tiantai Buddhist Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 6.

[94] Compare Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 177.

[95] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:97.

[96] Behmen, "Aurora", 129.

[97] More about the external/internal character of evil in Böhme, see Weeks, *Boehme*, 110.

One cannot ignore, however, the fact that the reality of evil is a constant presence in creation and that, according to Baur, Böhme placed divinity and creation at the same level with the intent to cancel the ontological and objective character of the former with the intent to transfer them onto the latter. Thus, evil seems to exist because it is part of creation, and creation is the only objective reality. The idea and the spiritual reality of divinity may well define aspects of creation, and it may also spiritually explain the reality of evil, but it does not initiate it.[99] Evil is rooted in creation, or in history, and it exists in the idea of divinity only to the extent that divinity explains—evidently, in a spiritual way—the mundane origin of evil.[100] Evil though is connected with God and his will since it manifests itself in God's contingent creation.

The Will and God between Creation and Fragility

The imagery of divine figures helps Böhme explain that creation cannot be comprehended in full without reference to spirituality. This is why, even before mentioning anything related to the existence of nature, he discloses how he understands the relationships within the Godhead. Thus, Böhme enumerates three propositions which draft his image of the connection within God's being. First, God's heart is the first will in the Father;[101] second, the Father is the first desire for the Son,[102] and third, the Son is the power and the light of the Father.[103] The proper understanding of the origin of creation resides in the very essence of God and this is the starting point for the presentation of creation as nature. In Böhme, nature craves for God's power and light, so it craves for God's Son, for God's desire, for God's will, and for God's heart. All these references to divinity as power, light, desire, will, and heart point to the fact that creation—or nature in general—is to be read in spiritual terms. Materiality is fundamentally spiritual, and the correct understanding of the materiality of creation should never exclude the spirituality of God. Given that nature originates in God's creative power, nature itself has the power to create, and Böhme points out that it creates the third principle.[104] To be more precise, he explains that nature produces the third principle in the eternal and dark matrix, based on the power of God's heart.[105]

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[98] See also Jeffrey Reid, *Real Words. Language and System in Hegel* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 48.

[99] If evil should be understood spiritually, then it means that the way to God should also be accepted in spiritual terms. See Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem in the French Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 232.

[100] See, for details, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 569–570.

[101] More information about Böhme's notion of "first will", in Jürgen Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling's Idea of a Contraction of God and Its Consequences for the Philosophy of History", 43–90, in Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (eds.), *The New Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2004), 54.

[102] For a perspective with negative connotations which approaches the relationship between the Father and the Son in Böhme, see Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies. Discourse on the Other* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 110.

In other words, the acts of creation, which are concrete experiences, are possible within the natural world,[106] but the world is able to create only things which are confined to the third principle, namely to fragility, temporality, and contingency.[107] As natural and material things are thoroughly defined by the third principle of fragility, temporality, and contingency, they originate—and most likely end up—in the eternity of darkness. At the same time, it should be noticed that God himself is revealed in nature, so God can be seen in the eternity of darkness, materiality, and fragility, although he is essentially defined by the eternity of light. If God had not revealed himself in nature, he would have stayed hidden for ever, Böhme contends, but God did reveal himself in nature, which explains nature's longing for God's light.[108] It is important to observe here that, despite its fragility, temporality, and contingency, nature is said to be eternal, most probably because of its origination in God. The connection between God and nature is extremely powerful in Böhme; there is no world without God and God cannot be understood without his revelation in the world. God's light is present—evidently in nature—and nature is hidden, most likely in God's light, since Böhme insists on the inextricable link between nature and the power of light. He also explains that the power is the sky, in which God's power is hidden. At the same time, God's power also shines in darkness, which can be an indication that, despite its fundamental spirituality, the idea of God, light, and goodness is the one which constantly informs, builds, and shapes the fragility, darkness, and materiality of the world.[109] In Böhme's words:

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[103] More about Böhme's idea of the "light of the Father", in Harmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 156. The same idea is also present in Paracelsus; see Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition. Studies in Western Esotericism*, trans. Christine Rhone (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 54.

[104] See also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 13, O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 43, and Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 1 (London: Routledge, 2002, first published 1969), 362.

[105] Compare Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 22.

[106] See also Patrick Sherry, "Disenchantment, Re-Enchantment, and Enchantment", 369–386, in *Modern Theology* 25.3 (2009): 383.

[107] See, for more details about fragility in Böhme, Christian Bendrath, *Leibhaftigkeit. Jakob Böhmes Inkarnationsmorphologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 309.

[108] Compare Gregory, *Quenching Hell*, 145.

> Now therefore we say (as the Scripture informs us) that God dwells in heaven and it is the truth. Now mark, as Moses writes, that God created the heaven out of the midst of the waters, and the Scripture says, God dwells in heaven, therefore we may now observe, that the water has its original from the longing of the eternal nature after the eternal light of God, but the eternal nature is made manifest by the longing after the light of God, as is mentioned before, and the light of God is present every where, and yet remains hidden in nature, for nature receives only the virtue of the light, and the virtue is the heaven wherein the light of God dwells and is hid, and so shines in the darkness. The water is the *materia*, or matter that is generated from the heaven, and therein stands the third, which again generates a life, and comprehensible essence, or substance, out of itself, the elements and other creatures.[110]

The engine of creation or the reality which sets everything in motion is the will, and although Böhme does not say this explicitly, one may infer that it is God's will. The will, or God's will, can be seen in creation as well as in all creatures.[111] To be more precise, it is based on the contemplation of creation that one can reach the conclusion that there is a will which sets everything in motion. This will is within darkness, and darkness itself bursts out because of the light which lives within the bursting darkness and causes the longing to emerge. The will that Böhme mentions and which is most likely God's will is not only visible in creation; it discloses itself or, as Böhme explains, it opens its wonder on its own. God decided to create, and especially to recreate nature on his own because of man's inability in this respect, which is another proof that spirituality is the starting point for the proper assessment and understanding of creation:[112]

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[109] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 7:29, 12, 14, 15 (Baur did not mention 7:15) but also 9:31, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 587.

[110] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 44.

[111] See also Losonsky, *Enlightenment and Action from Descartes to Kant*, 117.

> And if the will be thus in darkness, then it is in anguish, for it desires to be out of the darkness and that desiring is the flowing or working and the attracting in itself, where yet nothing is attained but a fierce source in itself, which by its attraction makes hardness and roughness, which the will cannot endure, and thus it stirs up the root of the fire in the flash (…) whereupon the re-comprehended will goes forth from the flash, into itself, and breaks the darkness, and dwells in the broken darkness, in the light, in a pleasant joy or habitation in itself, after which joy or habitation, the will (in the darkness) continually lusts, from whence longing arises, and thus it is an eternal band, which can never be loosed, and thus the will now labors in the broken Gate, that it may manifest or discover his wonders out of himself, as may be seen well enough in the creation of the world and all creatures.[113]

Creation is unbreakably connected with the third principle, which in Böhme means that the materiality of nature should be understood in terms of fragility, temporality, and contingency. The very existence of creation is linked with fragility, so the third principle has a beginning as well as an end. To be sure, everything in nature and all the beings which exist in the material world have an existence which is defined by time in the sense that their life begins and ends within the temporal constraints of the physical world.[114] At this point Baur understands that, in Böhme, the corporality of the things and beings which exists in nature is also doubled by a theoretical image which represents the actual *corpus* of either a thing or a being.[115] This is why Baur explains that when things or beings cease to exist, thus disintegrating into nothingness (from the standpoint of their material constitution), there is something which remains after their physical disappearance, and this is what Baur calls "the idea of (its) being as a shadow image". One can notice here Baur's intention to read Böhme dualistically, because the existence of either a thing or a being in the natural world is not only defined by materiality, but also by a certain theoretical image which is attached to its corporeal constitution.[116] Thus, for Baur, an entity is both material and theoretical, and what seems to remain indefinitely after the disintegration of a thing or being, namely after it ceases to be material or corporeal, is the image thereof, the idea which allows it to be perceived as a shadow image. The material constitution of creation is not eternal for Böhme, who explains that all material things and beings come from the reality of darkness and are the product of the *centrum* of darkness.[117] Whatever exists in time as material entity has already been "in the will"—most likely a reference to the fact that a thing or a being is conceived in God's eternal mind and will prior to its enactment as a temporal, fragile, and contingent existence in the material world—but this does not prevent it from lacking eternity. In fact, created things or material entities are not only temporal and finite, but also essentially fragile, which is also the case of "thoughts".[118]

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[112] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 21:18–19 (Baur incorrectly cites 21:17), Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 588.

[113] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 219.

[114] More about how Böhme's third principle relates itself to the idea of finitude, in Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 91.

[115] See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 157.

Böhme seems to connect the fragility of material things with the fragility of thoughts, so the contingency of matter is given by the contingency of thoughts. The idea of fragility is confirmed by Böhme as he explains that the spirit breaks "in the will", while "its body" breaks "in *fiat*" or in the word, which can be an indication that eternity "breaks" when the will decides to create material things.[119] The spirit seems to be above matter in Böhme, not only in the sense that the eternity of the spirit surpasses the finitude of matter, but also because matter itself is defined by the spirit. Matter cannot be fully understood without the spirit, and the spirit somewhat reveals itself through matter.[120]

Despite the fact that the spirit is "broken" because of matter and that matter is finite in all respects, the image of the material things exists for ever because it is not material, but spiritual. The spiritual image of a material thing remains forever—very much like the spirit itself—as a shadow of the thing, although the same image can never be brought back to light and visibility as a form, and form in Böhme is essentially material.[121] One should notice, however, that in Böhme the idea of being as referring to material things cannot be detached from the actuality of the material existence of things. In other words, a thing has a "being" or an actual existence for as long as it exists as a material entity. A thing cannot exist forever because its being ceases to exist once matter dissipates into nothingness.[122] This is why the only aspect which remains following the thing's material disappearance is its image; the image of what was formally a material entity exists forever because the image is not only spiritual and theoretical—the image lacks materiality, so it can neither be broken, nor can it be subject to fragility since there is no being within it (because the being of a thing is intrinsically connected with its materiality).[123] Here is Böhme's explanation:

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[116] For details about how Böhme sees the corporeality of theoretical images or principles, see Willi Temme, *Krise der Leiblichkeit. Die Sozietät der Mutter Eva* (*Buttlarsche Rotte*) *und der radikale Pietismus um 1700* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1998), 312.

[117] Compare Alexander Norman Jeffares, *The Circus Animals. Essays on W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1970, and Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970), 107ff.

[118] See also Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung*, 721.

[119] More information about the will to create in Böhme, in Regula M. Zwahlen, *Das revolutionäre Ebenbild Gottes. Anthropologien der Menschenwürde bei Nikolaj A. Berdjaev und Sergej N. Bulgakov* (Wien: LIT Verlag, 2010), 202.

[120] Böhme's conviction that matter and spirit must be kept together influenced Oetinger. See Barry Stephenson, *Veneration and Revolt. Hermann Hesse and Swabian Pietiesm* (Waterloo: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 2009), 199–200.

> Nothing corrupts or is transitory, but only the spirit in the will, and its body in the *fiat*, and the figure remains eternally in the shadow. And this figure could not thus have brought to light and to visibility, that it might subsist eternally, if it had not been in the essence, but now it is also incorruptible, for in the figure there is no essence. The center in the source is broken asunder, and gone in its ether, receptacle or air, and the figure does neither good nor evil, but it continues eternally to the manifestation of the deeds of wonder, and the glory of God, and for the joy of the angels. For the third principle of the material world shall pass away, and go into its ether, and then the shadow of all creatures will remain, also of all growing things, vegetables and fruits, and of all that ever came to light, as also the shadow and figure of all words and works, and that incomprehensibly, also without understanding and knowledge, like a nothing or shadow in respect of the light.[124]

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[121] Hallacker, "On Angelic Bodies. Some Philosophical Discussions in the Seventeenth Century", 201–214, in Iribarren and Lenz (eds.), *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 208.

[122] Compare Rietbergen, *Europe. A Cultural History*, 304.

[123] These ideas were taken by Baur from Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:37, 38, 39, although he does not mention their source. Baur wrongly quoted Böhme again, so Böhme's "Weil's aber ist aus der Finsterniß hervorgegangen" ("Since it [the *fiat*, God's decree or word] originated from darkness") becomes "Was aus der Finsterniß ist herfürgegangen" ("What originated from darkness"). Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 588.

[124] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 63.

The reality of being is strongly connected with the idea of fragility, which also confirms that the being must come to its end at a certain point in time. As far as Böhme is concerned, and with respect to his understanding of creation, the reality of being cannot exist without the equally important reality of the body, so when the body disintegrates, the being is no longer there.[125] In addition to having a body, each being has a *centrum*, and it is the center of one's being that breaks when the end of that being is enacted in the reality of the natural world. The center of being becomes broken in agony, so the immediate result is that the center of one's being,[126] its very essence, and the being itself "goes into ether", or dissipates into nothingness.[127]

What remains is the shadow of the thing or the being which had dissipated. This shadow or figure, as Böhme calls it, is a reality in itself; nevertheless, it is not a physical reality, but rather a spiritual one. It exists, as it were, but not in physical terms; it exists as a real possibility in a spiritual way. The shadow of the being or the thing which comes to its end is morally neutral according to Böhme; thus, it can neither commit evil nor perform good. What the shadow of broken or "dead" things can do is remain for ever in "God's wonder and splendor", a phrase which in Böhme may well point to the objective reality of God's supernatural being, but in Baur it only shows his conviction that spirituality is the key for understanding material reality. The shadow of the being or the thing which ceases to exists in natural reality will consequently remain not only in "God's wonder and splendor", but also within the "angels' joy", another reference which allows Böhme to display his conviction about the transcendence of an objective God,[128] while for Baur is only a way to assess his faith in the primacy of spirituality over materiality, although both are equally real.[129]

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[125] For details about the connection between one's being and the body in Böhme, see Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, 161.

[126] Böhme's idea of the center influenced Schelling, whose definition of being—especially God's being—includes reference to the dualism between light and darkness, coupled with the notion of the center. See David L. Clark, "'The Necessary Heritage of Darkness': Topics of Negativity in Schelling, Derrida, and de Man", 79–146, in Tilottama Rajan and David L. Clark (eds.), *Intersections. Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 89.

[127] Böhme's notion of ether seems to have influenced even Isaac Newton. See Ivana Marková, *Dialogicality and Social Representations. The Dynamics of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60, n. 10.

[128] The transcendence and objectivity of God is not necessarily objective in nature; it can acquire only linguistic connotations. For details about the notion of shadow in Böhme, see Stephen Theron, *Thematising Revelation in the Ecumenical Age. Accomplishing Religion with Hegel* (San Francisco, CA: Grin Publishing, 2009), 31–32.

Böhme is very clear when it comes to defining the end of being or the end of things within the reality of the physical world of creation. Thus, he points out that the third principle of the material world is defined by fragility, and when fragility becomes a reality within the body of a being or thing, then the being or the thing goes "into ether"; it disintegrates into nothingness. As a result, whatever exists in the material world, which means all the things and beings that once came to light, remains a "shadow".[130] All words and deeds became shadows and "figures"; in other words, they enter a state of existence which is no longer physical, but rather figurative. This figurative existence defining the beings and things which ceased to exist in a material way is characterized by the lack of reason and knowledge, so it is a state of nothingness, darkness, and obscurity that stands in total opposition with the reality of light. The image or the figure of the dead being or thing is theoretical, and Böhme points out that it remains without the spirit. It seems that Böhme is ready to embrace both living and dead beings or things as pertaining to God's all-encompassing reality.[131] This may explain his conviction that the eternal soul or reason became visible due to God's wisdom not only to reveal God's wonders, but also to allow the eternal and figurative wonders to stay before him,[132] so Böhme writes that:

> (…) a beast has no eternal spirit, its spirit is from the spirit of this world, out of the corruptibility, and passes away with the body, till it comes to the figure without spirit, that figure remains standing, seeing that the eternal mind has by the virgin of the eternal wisdom of God discovered itself in the out-birth, for the manifesting of the great wonders of God,

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[129] This is obviously a Hegelian influence in Baur. Spirituality and materiality (or spirit and matter) is just one of the binary constructs used by Böhme. Compare Thomas Loebel, *The Letter and the Spirit of Nineteenth-Century American Literature. Justice, Politics, and Theology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 165.

[130] Essential concepts like ether, nothing, shadow, and light—which are so important for Böhme's argument about the reality of being—influenced German and English cultures through their use by key representatives thereof, such as Goethe and Coleridge. See Eric G. Wilson, "Coleridge and Science", 640–660, in Frederick Burwick (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 652.

[131] Compare Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 314.

[132] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 16:45, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 588.

> therefore those creaturely figures and also the figured wonders, must stand before him eternally.[133]

In other words, the materiality of creation should be coupled with the immateriality of the shadows which define the dissipation of matter, which means that both the physical reality and the theoretical reality of creation are aspects which define the essence thereof. Embracing such an explanation is not easy, and Böhme himself accepts that it is inconceivable to accept that that the figurative image of the being has some meaning for the being itself following the death of that being. Nevertheless, this is the inscrutable and unfathomable purpose of God in his will, which caused all things to be created in the physical and material world. This is why, in Böhme, creation is not only material, but also spiritual, and it seems that the spirituality of creation is always more important than its materiality. This appears to be the case especially because of Böhme's belief that the spirituality of being continues to exist—although in a figurative way—after the material existence of that being has reached its physical end.[134] Materiality, however, is characterized by the third principle, namely fragility, which is again seen in dualistic terms, spiritual and natural, since both the devil and man are directly linked with it.[135]

The Materiality of the World between the Devil and Man

Böhme makes it clear that God created the third principle following the fall of the devil, which lost his glory. The rebellious actions of both Lucifer and the angels that accepted his line of thought were countered by God through the creation of fragility, temporality, and contingency—in a word, through the creation of the material world and of humanity.[136] This underlining is important because the material world takes some precedence over the spiritual world, in the sense that it is materiality which comes first as the firm reality that can be seen, and then the spiritual world is a complementary reality which describes the world of matter. In other words, from the standpoint of humanity, this world is the first to be accessed by the perceptions of human beings, and then the spiritual world is discovered as a reality which provides the material world with meaning and significance. Thus, the spiritual image or significance of fragile, temporal, and contingent—in a word, finite—beings and things in the material world is meant to last forever.[137]

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[133] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 146.

[134] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:40 (although Baur mentions 9:37–40 as the source of the quotation), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 588–589.

[135] For details about Böhme's connection between the third principle, on the one hand, and the devil and the human being, on the other hand, see Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 153.

[136] The third principle becomes manifest in a material way as a reflection of the first two principles. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 21.

The spiritual meaning of finite material beings and things is infinite, and this seems to be the case because—as Böhme explains it—the devils were angels which not only lost their initial glory, but had also been intended to exist in the *locus* of this material world.[138] Nevertheless, having lost their splendor because of their rebellion, Böhme underlines that God wanted his will and intention to prevail, so he literally gave the *locus* of this world another angelic army, which was meant to last forever. This is to say that, the vacated *locus* of this world—which is the result of Lucifer's actions and of those of the fallen angels—was filled with another host of angels, which are the human beings.[139] The juxtaposition of the phrase "angelic host" and the word "man" in Böhme seems to suggest—at least in Baur's thinking—that the human being is fundamentally a spiritual microcosm. The human being, which is a material reality at first glance, cannot be fully understood and neither can it understand itself without the spiritual dimension which is so closely attached to it by Böhme's presentation of humanity as an angelic army.[140]

The spirituality of humanity is reinforced by Böhme as he points out that God created "creatures" whose shadows—or spiritual images, spiritual significance—were intended to last forever following the dramatic change of the world, most likely subsequent to Lucifer's rebellious deeds.[141] As a creation of God meant to replace the realm of the fallen angels, humanity demonstrated both goodness and evil within its innermost constitution. In other words, humanity is divine and good having been created by God, but at the same time humanity is evil as the *locus* of its creation is closely connected with the reality of fallen angels.[142] This is why the feeling of joy as well as the capacity to take care of the animals in the world—Böhme seems to imply—were seriously altered by humanity's relationship with the *locus* of the fallen devils. This, however, was God's intention who spoke in this respect, Böhme argues, so the world is exactly like this because its eternal spirituality is coupled with the finitude of materiality:[143]

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[137] Böhme's idea of the eternity of spirituality permeated the English and German cultures of the early nineteenth-century, especially in the writings of William Blake and Hegel. See Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult*, 32.

[138] For details about the materiality and the anthropomorphism of Böhme's angels, see Edward Hirsch, *The Demon and the Angel. Searching for the Source of Artistic Inspiration* (Orlando, FA: Harcourt, 2002), 257, n. 115.

[139] Such a close connection between angels and humans triggered a high degree of speculation in Protestant circles to the point that doctrine bordered folklore, experiential enthusiasm, and occult beliefs. See also Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels. The Early Modern Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117.

[140] See also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation by Jakob Böhme*, 22, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 116.

[141] The direct implication of such a conviction is the belief that God was unable to put a stop to Lucifer's rebellion. See also Robert Crocker, *Henry More, 1614–1687. A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 55.

> Behold, when God had created the third principle, after the fall of the devils, when they fell from their glory (for they had been angels, standing in the place of this world) yet nevertheless he would that his will and purpose should stand, and therefore he would give to the place of this world an angelical host again, which should continue to stand for ever. And now he, having created the creatures, whose shadows after the changing of the world should continue for ever, yet there was no creature found that could have any joy therein [in the shadows], neither was there any creature found that might manage the beasts in this world, therefore God said, *let us make man an image like unto us, which may rule over all the beasts, and creatures upon the earth, and God created man to be his image, after the image of God created he him*.[144]

Concerning the idea that, in Böhme, man is a microcosm, Baur believes that the human being contains within itself the reality of the same history which is also attached to Lucifer. In other words, the human being cannot be detached from the "history"—or rather the reality—of Lucifer, which speaks of man's capacity and proneness towards evil; man is like Lucifer in many respects, although the fundamental difference between the two is that man has within himself not only the reality of the fall, but also the possibility of salvation.[145]

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[142] An interesting remark about Böhme's dualism of good and evil is that he did not speak about good and evil *per se*, but rather about good and fallen good. See Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, *Writing against the Family. Gender in Lawrence and Joyce* (Carbondale, IL: Souther Illinois University Press, 1994), 271, n. 17.

[143] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:8, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 591–592.

[144] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 66.

[145] For details about Böhme's view of man as microcosm, compare Felecia Wright McDuffie, *"To Our Bodies Turn We Then". Body as Sacrament in the Works of John Donne* (London:

These two vital aspects were instilled in him by creation; this is why humanity is a mixture between good and evil, while Lucifer is only dominant evil. Baur is convinced that, according to Böhme, man was created in a state of ideal perfection from which he deeply sank into his current state, which is characterized by both good and evil as a permanent reality that is forever unsettled.[146]

Thus, Baur seems to perceive a strong dualism in Böhme, which is given not only by man's state in the world, but also by his creation. The ideal perfection of man's original state does not exclude the reality of evil; on the contrary, it appears to include it as one of man's innermost features, but while in its original state of creation man was meant to control his evil, his current state proves his utter incapacity to deal with evil in a way which could promote goodness on a regular basis.[147] This is to say that man sank very deep into insignificance having given up on his original capacity to promote the good in favor of his finite materiality, which seems to dominate his existence in the world to the detriment of the good. Nevertheless, despite his current state, man was created by God to replace king Lucifer, so in this respect, man is a king himself, at least based on his initial state of creation.[148]

Man was created out of matter, not out of nothing, which means that he is the quintessence of the stars and elements—Böhme writes—which indicates that the entire universe shares the same matter. To be more precise, the matter of stars and elements is thoroughly earthly, as Böhme points out, so the creation of humanity is confined to matter, or to the very core-substance of the universe itself. The reality of the human being is inextricably linked with what Böhme calls the "earthly center",[149] so whatever human beings do, which also indicates what they are, belongs to the reality of the earth and fragility.[150]

Continuum, 2005), 2; Don Krasher Price, *The Scientific Estate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 85, and Harrison, *The Second Coming*, 20–21.

[146] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 592.

[147] The struggle between good and evil in every human being is nevertheless present at all times. This conviction of Böhme's is exactly what influenced Quaker theology and practice. See Richard L. Greaves, *Dublin's Merchant Quaker. Anthony Sharp and the Community of Friends, 1643–1707* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), also 42.

[148] See also Annemarie Nooijen, *"Unserm grossen Bekker ein Denkmal"? Balthasar Bekkers* Betoverde Weereld *in den deutschen Landen zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung* (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2009), 237; Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 2, 166, and Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 122.

[149] See also Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "New Age Spiritualities as Secular Religion: A Historian's Perspective", 145–160, in *Social Compass* 46.2 (1999): 149.

[150] For more details about the materiality and fragility of man in Böhme, see Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 153.

Consequently, the human being is not only earthly, material, and fragile; it is also temporal, finite, and contingent.[151]

It should be noticed here that God created man out of matter, and this is why his being has a material or physical end;[152] the whole situation though is a bit more complex, in the sense that—given his creation by God—man is also connected with the reality of God and that of heaven, which is evidently God's divine reality. In this respect, Böhme indicates that man shares his existence with the heavenly matrix, which is a phrase that describes God's divine realm. The heavenly matrix is the source or the root of the earthly reality, so it is through his material essence that man is linked with divinity.[153] According to God's initial plan, the heavenly center or the divine essence which defines man's reality was meant to stay fixed; in other words, the earthly essence of man was never intended to be awoken.

Thus, man was in the beginning the lord of stars and elements, while all earthly creatures feared him because of his power. Man was created to be anything but fragile and finite, because all creatures had their power and features *in* him. Man's initial sovereignty over the created world was confirmed—Böhme believes—by man's capacity to exercise his reason, since his power was based on the power of understanding.[154] In other words, man was intended to incorporate within his being all three principles and it is in this respect that he was meant to exist in God's likeness. Man therefore was created to exist as a being which knows the agony of darkness, the agony of light, and the agony of this world, but the notion of agony here does not necessarily point to pain, but rather to man's awareness,[155] as Böhme explains:

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[151] Compare Ferdinand von Ingen, "Der Anfang der Morgenröte: Jakob Böhmes reformatorische Mystik", 207–220, in Mariano Delgado and Gotthard Fuchs (Hrsg.), *Die Kirchenkritik der Mystiker. Prophetie aus Gotteserfahrung*, Band 2: Frühe Neuzeit (Fribourg: Academic Press / Freiburg: Paulusverlag / Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 2005), 211.

[152] See Christian Steineck, *Grundstrukturen mystischen Denkens* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2000), 163.

[153] Compare Susanne Edel, *Die individuelle Substanz bei Böhme und Leibnitz* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 188.

[154] See Joseph E. Duncan, *Milton's Earthly Paradise. A Historical Study of Eden* (St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 259.

[155] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:11, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 592. The idea of agony results from Baur's quotation taken from Böhme. While Baur quotes Böhme as using the word "Qual" or "agony" ("Qual der Finsterniß … und auch des Lichts, und … auch die Qual dieser Welt", Böhme in fact uses the term "Quelle" or

> But yet this *massa* was out of the heavenly matrix, which is the root of the out-birth, or [the root] of the earth. The heavenly center ought to remain fixed, and the earthly ought not to be awakened. And in this virtue [and power] he was lord and ruler over the stars and elements, and all creatures should have stood in the awe of him, and he should have been incorruptible, he had the virtue and properties of all manner of creatures in him, for his virtue was out of the virtue or power of the understanding. Now then he ought to have all the three principles, if he was to be the similitude of God, the source of the darkness, and also the light, and also the source of this world, and yet he should not live and act in all three, but in the one of them only, and that in the paradisical [property], in which his life [quickened] arose, [or did exist].[156]

According to God's initial plan, man was supposed to be fully aware of darkness, light, and fragility. This does not mean that man was meant to live in all three; to be sure, Böhme underlines that man's existence as God's created being was never intended to be linked with all three realities. Man was not designed to live in darkness, light, and fragility; on the contrary, man was intended to live exclusively in the reality of the paradisiac reality of God's light.[157] His entire life and existence was meant to be powerfully and deeply rooted in God's realm of light, while his awareness of darkness and fragility seems to have been only a feature that allowed him to assess created reality in its completeness. It seems that the power of reason, which God gave man through creation, should have kept him from living in darkness and fragility; in other words, Böhme seems to imply that the capacities of reason were devised to help humanity lead its existence within the reality of light, while the reality of darkness and fragility was supposed to be experienced only as a possibility, or rather a theoretical reality. Thus, reason was the power which should have maintained humanity above the earthly reality of fragility and darkness, so—in a way—Böhme seems to believe in the power of man's reason to control matter.[158] Within God's initial

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"source" ("die Quelle der Finsterniß und ... Auch des Lichtes, und ... auch die Quelle dieser Welt").

[156] Behmen, "The three principles", 67.

[157] See also Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge of the Sacred* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 27–28.

[158] Reason, however, has its own limitations. See, for instance, George Kalamaras, *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension. Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 86–87.

plan, reason was intended to shape matter, not the other way around; this is why he points out that man's sovereignty over the material world was meant to be supported through his power of understanding, which presupposes the fact that his earthly essence was meant to stay dormant under the power of knowledge, as Böhme underlines in the following text:[159]

> And Adam and all men should have gone wholly naked, as he then went, his clothing was the clarity [or brightness] in the virtue [or power] no heat nor cold touched him, he saw day and night [clearly] with open eyes, in him there was no sleep, and in his mind there was no night, for the divine virtue [and power] was in his eyes, and he was altogether perfect. He had the *limbus*, and also the matrix in himself, he was no [male] or man, nor [female or] woman, as we in the resurrection shall be [neither]. Though indeed the knowledge of the marks [of distinction will] remain in the figure, but the *limbus* and the matrix not separated, as now [they are].[160]

If this is true, then it is evident why Baur believes Böhme to be a Gnostic:[161] man is a dualistic being, in which heaven and earth—or rather the divine reality of God and the material reality of the world—meet in a way which leaves things somewhat indecisive: though created to exercise his power of reason over material creation, man ended up succumbing to anything but reason, so his life was no longer rooted in the paradisiac realm of God; man became a creature of the material world, so instead of living in light, he eventually took the pathway of darkness.

The idea of *inqualification* resurfaces again in Böhme's thought regarding the creation of humanity.[162] Actually, Böhme uses the verb (*inqualieren*) here as he explains that the spirit of man should not have inqualified (exchanged qualities or combined) with the spirit of stars and elements—most likely a reference to created materiality—which on the other hand underlines the fact that man did in fact inqualify with it.[163] As inqualification is a noun which describes the idea of quality and especially the movement of quality towards its negativity, it is clear that the human being was not supposed to adhere to the spirit of stars and elements, but this is exactly what he eventually did. What man should have done instead of accepting the spirit of stars and elements—which bears the idea of aversion and rebellion even towards one's own self and individuality—was to continue to stay within the influence of the paradisiac center, a phrase which denotes the reality of God's divine existence.[164] According to Böhme, the paradisiac center is insufflated by God or breathed by God himself; it is, in Böhme words, the "breath of the Holy Spirit", and this particular spirit was the reality which should have inspired the human being given that it was present within him from the moment of his creation. Man was supposed to act based on the knowledge he received from the Holy Spirit and it was according to his will that man should have decided to inform his understanding and behavior.

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[159] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:11, 18, 21, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 593.

[160] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 68.

[161] For details on Böhme's Gnostic dualism, see Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus. An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, second revised edition (Basel: Karger, 1982), 206–207, n. 6.

[162] See also Glenn Magee, "Hegel's Philosophy of History and Kabbalist Eschatology", 231–246, in Will Dudley (ed.), *Hegel and History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 242.

Thus, all human beings were meant to be born again from the Holy Spirit, but also to awaken the *centrum*, the very essence of their innermost constitution, in a movement which was intended to keep them away from the spirit of stars and elements, but also from their inborn adversity.[165] Had human beings acted this way, the rebellion of the spirit of stars and elements should have stayed away from them and the divinely inspired Holy Spirit would have continued to breathe God's will into their lives. By staying away from the rebellious adversity of the spirit of stars and elements, human beings would have been able to be what they were supposed to be through their creation: an angelic army born in Paradise whose most fundamental characteristic would have been the lack of anguish and distress. By creation, man was whole and perfect, but in Böhme the initial perfection of humanity seems to take the "shape" of androgyny.[166] Man's apparent androgynous perfection is explained by Böhme through the supposition that, by creation, the human being was neither male nor female,[167] and he seems to support this claim by resorting to eschatology. In other words, Böhme's conviction that humanity's initial state was defined by androgyny is supported eschatologically, because the idea that the human being was by creation neither masculine nor feminine can only be explained by making reference to the Christian teaching about the resurrection.[168]

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[163] Details about the inqualification in Böhme, in Sophia Vietor, *Astralis von Novalis. Handschrift—Text—Werk* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2001), 267, and Tesch, "Der Mystiker Jakob Böhme", 85–95, in Rainer Flasche, Erich Geldbach (Hrsg.), *Religionen, Geschichte, Oekumene*, 87.

[164] See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 44.

[165] Consequently, freedom from adversity is possible only when the human being connects itself with its own divinity, when its materiality is understood spirituality, and its existence within the boundaries of time is deciphered as referring to eternity. See also Rachel Campbell-Johnston, *Mysterious Wisdom. The Life and Work of Samuel Palmer* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), 95.

[166] Compare Willi Temme, "From Jakob Böhme via Jeane Leade to Eva von Buttlar: Transmigrations and Transformations of Religious Ideas", 101–106, in Jonathan Strom,

Human beings will be neither masculine nor feminine when resurrection occurs—Böhme points out—because what they will be is a reality that places them in the vicinity of God himself. The human being, therefore, will be the correct and true image of God's likeness, which means that following the moment of creation the human being was indeed the true image of God's likeness, which points to God's essential androgyny.[169] In other words, man's androgyny was manifest at creation and it will be manifest at resurrection, which points to the fact that in between the two defining moments of humanity, the human being exists as man and woman as a characteristic of its fragility, temporality, and contingency. It should be noted here that God's initial intention with humanity was accomplished by creation, but it will be accomplished again through resurrection.[170] The first image of humanity, which was evident when man was created, must come back again and remain in Paradise—Böhme underlines—because this is the only way to understand God's plan with human beings:[171]

> This must be Adam's condition, and thus he was a true and right image and similitude to God. He had no such hard bones in his flesh [as we now

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Hartmut Lehmann, and James Van Horn Melton (eds.), *Pietism in Germany and North America, 1680–1820* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 102.

[167] Man's original prelapsarian androgyny was a concern of mystic theology in general. See, for instance, how androgyny was perceived in Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680), a Flemish mystic, who does not seem to have read Böhme's works. See Joyce Irwin, "Anna Maria van Schurman and Antoinette Bourignon: Contrasting Examples of Seventeenth-Century Pietism", 301–315, in *Church History* 60.3 (1991): 314.

[168] Compare James Rovira, *Blake and Kierkegaard. Creation and Anxiety* (London: Continuum, 2010), 148–149, n. 6.

[169] See also John Rumrich, "Milton's God and the Matter of Chaos", 1035–1046, in *PMLA. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 110.5 (1995): 1045, n. 17.

[170] This resurrection is—most likely—not material, but rather spiritual in nature. See Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia. The Masonic Circle of N.I. Novikov* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 157–158.

[171] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:11, 18, 21, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 593.

> have] but they were strength, and such [a kind of] virtue, also his blood was not of the tincture of the aquatrish matrix, but it was out of the heavenly matrix. In brief, it was altogether heavenly, as we shall appear [and be] at the day of the resurrection. For the purpose of God standeth, the first image must return and come again and continue in paradise, and seeing it could be done in no other form [way or manner] nor [that which was lost] be restored again, therefore God would rather spend his own heart, his eternal will is unchangeable, that must stand.[172]

Böhme's insistence on the dualism of creation and resurrection is another element which seems to have influenced Baur's decision to read Böhme in Gnostic terms, because both creation and resurrection appear to be spiritual moments rather than material events.[173] For Baur, it seems that man is created spiritually and is resurrected the very same way in a movement which defines the actuality of our material life, not a certain existence following physical death. Baur though goes on with details about Böhme's theory of creation, by noticing that the Trinity of principles which was placed in Adam—who seems to be representative for the entire human race—was doubled by the reality of strife, which may provide Baur with elements that help him read Böhme in a Gnostic fashion.[174]

From God to God's Word, Lucifer, and Man

When it comes to understanding Böhme in a Gnostic key, Baur chooses from Böhme the latter's presentation of God and his actions. First, it is important to notice that, in Böhme, God is the one who gives birth to his heart and Son, which is indicative of the total equivalence between God's heart and God's Son. Through the birth of his heart and Son, God contained his will in order for his power to be delivered.[175] Thus, God's power and will are manifested in his heart and Son. Second, God speaks from himself, so the power and will which are present within God's being are connected with the efficiency of the word. God's word is powerful and it represents his will; at the same time, God's word represents his heart and ultimately his Son. God's word speaks from God's will, but also in a way which is preparatory for God's will—ultimately, God's Son.[176] God's word prepares the way for God's Son, while God's Son can be said to be God's word. Böhme points out that whatever God utters through his word represents God's eternal wisdom encapsulated in his will. To be sure, God's word speaks not only God's wisdom as some sort of abstract concept; in uttering God's wisdom, God's word speaks out God's virgin, God's wisdom, and God's virtue.[177] Third, in Böhme, God's virgin is the one which implements God's word, so God's powerful *fiat*—the very word which set the entire creation in motion—is brought to effectiveness; in other words, it becomes worldly or materializes itself.[178]

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[172] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 69.

[173] For details about Böhme's interpretation of creation in spiritual terms, see Robert Simmons, *Stones of the New Consciousness. Healing, Awakening, and Co-Creating with Crystals, Minerals, and Gems* (East Montpelier, VT: Heaven and Earth Publications / Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2009), xvi.

[174] See also Catherine F. Smith, "Jane Lead's Wisdom: Women and Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England", 55–63, in Jan Wojcik and Raymond-Jean Frontain (eds.), *Poetic Prophecy in Western Literature* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 60–61.

[175] Compare Peter Huijs, *Gnosis. Ströme des Lichtes in Europa* (Birnbach: DRP Rosenkreuz Verlag, 2005), 214.

It is through his virgin, or wisdom, that God creates everything as much as he created everything in the beginning. God's virgin and wisdom reflect themselves in all the things which were created because the wonder of all things was brought to fruition when God's word was spoken through God's wisdom.[179] Creation therefore is the result of God's heart and word, which both belong to the Father, but they were uttered "with and through" God's noble virgin, which is God's eternal wisdom and omniscience. At the same time, "with and through" God's virgin, the salvation of humanity from the influence of Lucifer's darkness was worked out in close connection with God's word.[180]

At this point, a clarification is needed. Baur mistakingly quotes Böhme as having written that the representative or the agent of the serpent

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[176] See also Johann Anselm Steiger, "Zu Gott gegen Gott. Oder: Die Kunst, gegen Gott zu glauben. Isaaks Opferung (Gen 22) bei Luther, im Luthertum der Barockzeit, in der Epoche der Aufklärung und im 19. Jahrhundert", 185–238, in Johann Anselm Steiger und Ulrich Heinen (Hrsg.), *Isaaks Opferung (Gen 22) in den Konfessionen und Medien der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 203.

[177] Berhard Nitsche, *Gott, Welt, Mensch. Raimon Panikkars Gottesdenken-Paradigma für eine Theologie in interreligiöser Perspektive?* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008), 592.

[178] Compare Jochen Büchel, *Psychologie der Materie. Vorstellungen und Bildmuster von der Assimilation von Nahrung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Paracelsismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 169.

[179] For details about creation and the wisdom of God in Böhme, see Gerd Bergfleth, "Umnachtung und Erleuchtung", 125–154, in *Aufgang. Jahrbuch für Denken, Dichten, Musik* 4 (2007): 132.

[180] See also Ernst Benz, "Menschwerdung bei Leopold Ziegler", 35–50, in Paulus Wall (Hrsg.), *Leopold Ziegler. Weltzerfall und Menschwerdung* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2001), 44.

(*Schlangenvertreter*) was brought into being, which makes no sense since the word *Schlangenvertreter* does not appear about Lucifer, but rather concerning the word of God's promise. This is why it seems that the word *Schlangenvertreter* should have been in fact *Schlangentreter* (which is the correct word used by Böhme in *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens* 18:25), the one which treads on the serpent's head and crushes it, the Christ or the Messiah, as Böhme has previously explained in detail.[181] As a result, man's salvation comes from the serpent-treader, from Christ, the Messiah, who is the word of God's promise; to be precise, he is the word of the promise which was pronounced by God the Father,[182] as Böhme points out:

> (…) The Word, which God spoke in paradise to Adam and Eve, concerning the treader upon the serpent, (which imaged [or imprinted] itself in the door of the light of life, standing in the center of the gate of heaven, and waiting perceptibly in the minds of the holy men, even till this time), that same word is become man, and that same divine word is again entered into the virgin of the divine wisdom, which was given to the soul of Adam near the word, to be a light and a handmaid as to the word.[183]

It is crucially important to see here that God's word, God's promise, God's virgin, God's wisdom, and God's omniscience are all notions which are said to have been imprinted in Adam and Eve, in the material reality of the human being.[184] The very soul and reason—in Gnostic terms, the rational soul—of the human being is characterized by God's word, promise, virgin, wisdom, and omniscience, so this is why—at least in a spiritual way—the human being can be said to have been connected with eternity. Humanity is eternal not according to its materiality; on the contrary, it is its spirituality, its connection with divinity, which makes it eternal. This soul, the soul which encompasses God's wisdom, omniscience, or the word of his promise, man's rational soul, is the only reality which is capable of opening the gates of the kingdom of heaven, while Adam and Eve represent humanity's spirituality.[185] Böhme explains that man's rational soul enthrones itself in God's gates with God's chaste virgin, so it is man's reason and his capacity to perceive himself in the light of divine spirituality which turn him into an eternal being. Man's rational soul, therefore, has the capacity to place the human being in the very center of the life's light.[186] God's virgin received the human soul as her companion, so there is a powerful connection in Böhme between God's wisdom and man's soul. This liaison is the reality which endowed humanity with understanding and reason, and these features are constant for the human being, very much like the companionship between God's virgin and the human soul.[187]

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[181] For details about Christ as the *Schlangentreter* in Böhme, see Pierre Deghaye, "Oetinger und Boehme. Von der verborgenen Gottheit bis zum offenbaren Gott", 183–196, in Sabine Holtz, Gerhard Betsch, und Eberhard Zwink (Hrsg.), *Mathesis, Naturphilosophie, und Arkanwissenschaft im Umkreis Friedrich Christoph Oetingers, 1702–1782* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 195.

[182] For details about Christ, the *Schlangentreter*, seen as God's Word in Böhme, see Martin Brecht, "Die deutschen Spiritualisten des 17. Jahrhunderts", 205–240, in Martin Brecht (Hrsg.), *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 2. Band: Der Pietismus von siebzehnten bis zum frühen achzehnten Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1993), 211.

[183] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 173–174.

[184] Compare Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science*, 214–215.

It is very likely that Böhme's references to the ties between God's virgin and the human soul prompted Baur to select this text and then include it in his general perspective on Gnosticism. The dualism of the human being, which is a combination between materiality and spirituality, is a feature of traditional Gnosticism. The human being therefore can be considered an eternal reality despite its material existence precisely because of its capacity to understand itself in a spiritual way. Man dies but before he does so, he has the capacity to see his existence in the light of an eternity of spirituality; matter without the spirit is dead, so it is the spirit which makes matter eternal.[188]

The image of God's virgin is pictured again in dualistic terms in Böhme, which is another reason why Baur had such a manifest interest in including him amongst the Christian Gnostics. For instance, Böhme points out that God's virgin, which again is God's wisdom,[189] is the very gate of the senses, but at the same time she is connected with the "council of stars", or with the materiality of creation. This explanation is important because this is once more indicative of Böhme's desire to see humanity connected both to the matter from which it springs within its historical existence and to the nonmaterial reality which is called the soul. The human soul, therefore, lives in the "agony of the stars", or in the intricate reality of matter which seems to be in constant movement; such a statement pushes things even further in the sense that the human soul cannot be detached from its material existence. It is as if the soul were presented in material terms; nonetheless, for Böhme, it is fundamentally important to see the soul as a reality which is able to overcome matter.[190]

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[185] See also Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Erlösung durch Philologie. Der Poetische Messianismus Quirinius Kuhlmanns", 107–146, in Anthony Grafton und Moshe Idel (Hrsg.), *Der Magus. Seine Ursprünge und seine Geschichte in verschiedenen Kulturen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 130.

[186] Böhme's concept of the rational soul was noticed relatively early in the first half of the eighteenth century. See, for instance, J.C. Gottscheden, *Gespräche von mehr als einer Welt zwischen einem Frauenzimmer und einem Gelehrten*, 3. Auflage (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1738), 21.

[187] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 18:22–41, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 602.

[188] More details about Böhme's dualism between matter and spirit, as well as that between temporality and eternity, in Arthur McCalla, *A Romantic Historiosophy. The Philosophy of History of Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 290.

[189] Compare Midori Nakayama, "Jan Luykens Böhme-Rezeption in seinem Emblembuch *Jezus en de ziel* (Jesus und die Seele)", 231–254, in *Daphnis. Zeitschrift für mittlere deutsche Literatur und Kultur der frühen Neuzeit (1500–1700)* 34.1–2 (2005): 244–245.

This could be why God's virgin is unable to imagine herself or mirror herself exclusively in the human soul; for Böhme, it seems to be a matter of physical locality, which shows that God's virgin is positioned not only in relationship with the human soul, but also with another reality, which is most likely far too important. Böhme explains that this reality, to which God's virgin draws its constant attention, is God himself.[191] Thus, it is God's way that God's virgin wants to head to; thus, while she embraces the materiality of human existence and the spirituality of the human soul, she is nevertheless permanently looking at God himself. Given man's materiality, the human soul can be described as an "infernal serpent" which is definitely not rejected by God's virgin; what God's virgin does in addition to accepting the reality of the human soul's darkness is to stay before God, before his word and heart. In other words, Böhme's depiction of humanity involves a blend of materiality and spirituality; man is a being which is both matter and spirit, temporality and eternity.[192]

Despite his finitude, man is able to understand his death from the perspective of a higher power, which is the knowledge that teaches him to see himself in divine terms. Man is a being which incorporates good and evil in a way which can be saving due to his ability to perceive himself from a higher spiritual angle. Böhme underlines that the reality of materiality comes with the reality of darkness and evil; thus, the soul of Adam and Eve, as well as the souls of all human beings, have been tainted by the first principle, which is

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190 More information about the spirit's capacity to overcome matter in Böhme, especially when matter refers to the incarnation of Christ, see Günther Bonheim, "'Lernet von Ehe unterscheiden'. Jacob Böhmes Mystik der Naturen", 123–140, in Peter Dinzelbacher, *Mystic und Natur. Zur Geschichte ihres Verhältnisses vom Altertum bis zur Gegewart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 124.

191 Details about Böhme's perspective on the relationship between the Virgin and God, see Aniela Jaffé, *Bilder und Symbole aus E.T.A. Hoffmanns Märchen «Der goldne Topf»* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 1990), 91–92.

192 See Antonielli, *William Blake e William Butler Yeats*, 94.

darkness.[193] As a result, evil entered their lives; in fact, they appropriated evil for themselves, so they embraced the reality of evil as a result of the darkness of materiality; they fell into darkness and matter.[194] God's word and the serpent-treader did not "build" themselves in Adam's soul right away, Böhme points out, so the awareness of salvation did not become a reality in man's existence from the moment evil was accepted as such. Salvation, or more precisely, the knowledge which leads to salvation,[195] was an awareness to which humanity seems to have clung a little later although, as Böhme shows, the word or God's word spoken to the serpent-treader, which is Christ, eventually became man. God's word is Christ, which indicates that it is the human being which was able to understand salvation as higher knowledge embodied by Christ himself or the notion thereof, the primal man.[196]

Böhme points out that the awareness of salvation was not a sudden realization, and this aspect is crucial for his understanding of the human being. Evil comes first, this is why evil is the first principle, at least from the perspective of the human being. The world was fooled by the blindness inflicted through the action of darkness and evil; salvation from them came later as a realization that evil can be defeated if humanity changes its perspective about itself.[197] So the word did not incarnate right away, and neither did he come from heaven to become human and save humanity. The first principle of darkness and evil reigned supreme in the world of man, while God's word spoken to Christ was a reality which seems to have been devised to exist above the materiality of the physical world, to express God's love for man, and to reconnect man with God through God's love.[198] In Böhme's words:

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[193] Darkness entered Eve through Lucifer's ability to deceive her. See Pauen, *Dithyrambiker des Untergangs*, 54.

[194] For details about the fall of Adam and Eve in Böhme, see Simon Morrison, *Russian Opera and the Symbolist Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 208–209.

[195] Salvation as knowledge is another feature of Böhme's thought which can be considered Gnostic. See Marta Weigle, *Spiders and Spinsters. Women and Mythology* (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 2007), 264.

[196] For details about Böhme's understanding of salvation, see Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers*, 57, n. 94.

[197] This means that, in Böhme, salvation depends on the correct understanding of creation. See W. Reginald Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 89.

[198] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 18:22–41, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 602.

> For the word (by its being given into the element, into the virgin matrix) is not separated from the Father, but it continues eternally in the Father, and it is (in the heaven of the element) every where present, into which [element] the same [word] is entered, and is become a new creature in man, which [new creature] is called God. (…) this new creature in the holy element is not generated of the flesh and blood of the virgin, but of God, out of the element, in a total fulness, and union of the holy Trinity, which [creature] continues with total fulness without ending therein eternally, which creature every where fills all, in all the gates of the holiness, whose depth has not ground, and is without number, measure, and name. (…) the corporeity of the element of this creature is inferior to the deity, for the deity is spirit, and the element is generated out of the word from eternity, and the lord entered into the servant, at which all the angels in heaven wonder. And it is the greatest wonder that is done from eternity, for it is against nature, and that may [indeed rightly] be [called] love.[199]

For Baur, this could have been the proof that man's awareness of spirituality is a reality which comes only after the darkness of evil has ruled for a while in man's life, so the awareness of spirituality which leads to the apprehension of the higher spiritual knowledge which is able to save humanity from evil is subsequent to the manifestation of evil in man's life.[200] This points to man's fundamental dualism as a being: evil and good intertwine in his material existence, and the only way to defeat evil is to hang the idea of goodness into a reality which transcends the immediacy of the physical world.[201] This world is tainted with evil and darkness, so if man really wants to rid himself of them, he should understand that his materiality can be seen from a totally different perspective. In physical terms, salvation cannot come from "below", from matter; it must come from "above", from the spirit, although both matter and spirit coexist in the physical reality of the world.[202] What is even more important though is that man should believe that salvation comes from above himself, from a spirituality which can be conceived in divine terms and whose *locus* lies ahead of the world's material dust.

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[199] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 174.

[200] More about spiritual knowledge in Böhme, in Elizabeth Burns Gamard, *Kurt Schwitter's* Merzbau. *The Cathedral of Erotic Misery* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 160.

[201] In Böhme, evil cannot exist without good and vice-versa; evil and good are "existential necessities". See Aniela Jaffé, *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of C.G. Jung* (Zürich: Daimon Verlag, 1984), 100.

[202] See also Karl Joël, *Wandlunger der Weltanschauung. Eine Philosophiegeschichte als Geschichtsphilosophie*, 1. Band (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1928), 444.

It seems that Böhme wants to present God's word in a transcendent way, in the sense that God's word is placed in a realm above the material world.[203] Thus, he points out that God's word spoke in Paradise and it come from the serpent-treader, namely from Christ.[204] As far as Christ is concerned, he is said to have built himself literally in the gates of the light of life, and one can easily guess that the light of life here may be a reference to the spiritual knowledge which comes from God's word and is then incarnate in Christ.[205] At the same time, one should not lose sight of the fact that, in Böhme, Christ stays in the center of the gates of heaven, another reference to his most fundamental transcendence and especially to his innermost spirituality. What is interesting here is not the fact that Böhme places Christ in the center of the gates of heaven, but that Christ is also said to be in the holy soul or reason of the human being; this is why man can be considered God.[206] To be sure, it is man who holds Christ within and, with Christ, he also has within his being the very essence of heaven, the knowledge which comes for the awareness of spirituality and which provides humanity with a higher meaning for its material and physical existence.[207] God's word, however, does not seem to have revealed itself right away; on the contrary, Böhme points out that God's word carefully waited until "this time", when the word became man.[208] When the word became incarnate, one can say—as Böhme himself does—that God's word was in God's virgin, which is God's divine wisdom.[209] The connection between God's word and God's wisdom is evident here, and the image of Christ seems to encompass both in Böhme's thought:[210]

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[203] In Böhme, however, the transcendence of God's word does not seem to be ontological, but rather spiritual. See Versluis, *Restoring Paradise*, 71.

[204] Compare Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 95.

[205] See also Hermann Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit. Johann Arndt "Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum" als Programm einer spiritualistisch-hermetischen Theologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 196.

[206] See also Deghaye, "Oetinger und Boehme", 183–196, in Holtz, Betsch, und Zwink (Hrsg.), *Mathesis, Naturphilosophie, und Arkanwissenschaft im Umkreis Friedrich Christoph Oetingers, 1702–1782*, 189.

[207] More about the idea of Christ's indwelling within the human being, also referring to Böhme, see Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock. Religions- und geistgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1952), 33.

[208] The word of God, namely Christ, also became "incarnate" within the soul of every human being. See also Claudia Tietz, *Johann Winckler (1642–1705). Anfänge eines lutherischen Pietisten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 2008), 207.

> The holy spirit of God built the formation in the wisdom of the virgin, in the holy element, in its center of the heaven, even in the highly worthy princely and angelical formation, and the regimen of the stars and elements of this world formed the outward man wholly, with all the essences of our human bodies, with a natural body and soul (wholly like us) in one only person. And yet every form has its own height, source, [or quality,] and perception, and [yet] the divine [source] has not so mixed, that thereby it is the less, but what it was, that it continues to be, and that which it was not, that it is, without severing from the divine substance, and the word abode in the Father, and the natural humanity in this world, in the bosom of the virgin Mary.[211]

Christ is therefore word and wisdom, and while he is both word and wisdom he is surely the very knowledge which originates in God's word and God's wisdom,[212] but also follows the material lineage of Adam, the first man. Adam's soul has always been close to God's wisdom and God's word, so Adam has been illuminated with God's spirituality from the very beginning.[213] The word of God, however, was placed in a servant, a clear reference to Christ, but Christ is within every human being as incarnation of God's word and wisdom, so it seems that every human being must embrace the idea of servanthood in line with Christ's higher knowledge and spirituality (and hence positivity),[214] while fully aware of the reality of evil (or negativity) represented by Lucifer.

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[209] For details, see Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses. Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 317.

[210] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 18:46–47.

[211] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 174–175.

[212] More information about the connection between God's wisdom and God's word as referring to Christ can be found in Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority, and Grammar in the Seventh Century. Decoding Virgilius Maro Gramaticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

[213] This is an image of the whole humanity, as Coleridge noticed. See Joel Harter, *Coleridge's Philosophy of Faith. Symbol, Allegory, and Hermeneutics* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011), 192.

[214] See also Bendrath, *Leibhaftigkeit*, 317.

CHAPTER 2

The Image of Lucifer

Lucifer as God's Creation

The second aspect that Baur learned from Böhme was the image of Lucifer, which introduces the notion of dualism because it conveys the idea of negativity as opposed to God's general positivity. Returning to Böhme's argument, Baur continues to profess a traditional understanding of creation in speaking about Lucifer's change into the devil by stressing the fact that God's creation was perfect, and this also should apply to Lucifer.[1] Baur notices that, in Böhme, Lucifer's creation should be connected with the "superb, lovely, and celestial saltpeter of divine qualities", which is another way of saying that Lucifer was made perfect by God, because his origin lies within the Godhead. Baur is very careful to mention here that, in Böhme, the saltpeter is an alchemistic as well as mystical description of God's substance, which also includes the idea of matter within God's being as an attempt to account for the matter that can be found in God's creation.[2] Resuming Böhme's presentation of Lucifer's coming into being, one should note that God himself created Lucifer out of his own inner essence, so his most evident characteristics—beauty, love, and divinity—were transferred onto Lucifer. The only distinction between God and Lucifer seems to have been the latter's creaturely essence as opposed to God's uncreated existence.

At the same time, Böhme points out that there was no distinction between the Lucifer's creation and the bringing into existence of the other two archangels. All three angelic hosts, together with their leaders, were created as a result of the same "movement"; there was nothing more or nothing less in Lucifer's creation than that of Michael and Uriel.[3] The fact that they were intended to be

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[1] See Austin Warren, *In Continuity. The Last Essays of Austin Warren*, ed. George A. Panichas (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 169.

[2] For a contrary opinion, which says that, in Böhme, the world was not created out of a "foreign" matter, but out of God's essence, see Ulrich L. Lehner, *Kants Vorsehungskonzept auf dem Hintergrund der deutschen Schulphilosophie und -Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 247. Nevertheless, the issue of whether God's essence is material remains problematic.

[3] Böhme's view of creation corresponds, in this respect, with that of Baader. See, for instance, Jürgen Stenzel, "Franz von Baaders theosophische Spinozakritik", 202–218, in Michael Czelinski, Thomas Kisser, Robert Schnepf, Marcel Senn, Jürgen Stenzel (Hrsg.),

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the image of God's Trinity in the created realm of angels is sufficient proof of God's desire that his features be transferred onto all three without discrimination. This is why Böhme insists that Lucifer was created in a state of perfection and, having been given life directly by God, he was the most beautiful of the angelic princes in heaven because—as Böhme underlines—he was adorned and clad in the very beauty of the Son of God. Something dramatic happened, however, in the "movement" of creation because Lucifer became corrupt, which led to him being stripped of his perfection, beauty, and brightness.[4] He seems to have lost these divine characteristics forever, so he turned into a totally different being, which is known as the devil—a fallen archangel whose foremost features were now anger and darkness, as Böhme makes clear:[5]

> (...) After it was risen up in the water, in the astringent quality, it rose up so furiously like a thunder clap, whereby it would prove and show forth its new deity, and so the fire rose up, as when there is a tempest of lightning, intending thereby to be so great, as to be above all things in God. (...) Love was turned into enmity, and the whole body became a black dark devil.[6]

It is crucial to understand that Lucifer's change into the devil was a movement which belonged entirely to him; God, on the other hand, had created him perfect—to the maximum extent that creation allows for perfection—and it seems that it was his own decision to corrupt his very nature which led to his dramatic transformation.[7] This is why Böhme underscores that Lucifer's initial perfection was indeed flawless in all respects. One should not overlook, however, the fact that Lucifer's original perfection was a factual gift which he received from God in reality. Lucifer's perfection was not theoretical, nor was it a mere possibility; Lucifer was God's perfect creature in reality, namely in the factual reality of creation, the very same way the other two archangels benefited from the same characteristics, since they all shared in divine perfection.[8]

Transformation der Metaphysik in die Moderne. Zur Gegenwärtigkeit der theoretischen und praktischen Philosophie Spinozas (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2003), 205.

[4] In Böhme, Lucifer's own corruption distorts everything else in creation. See Pektaș, *Mystique et philosophie*, 155.

[5] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:24–25.

[6] Behmen, "Aurora", 136.

[7] For details about Lucifer's fall in Böhme, see van Ingen, "Engelsturz. Zu einem Sinnkomplex bei Jacob Böhme", in Laufhütte (Hrsg.), *Literaturgeschichte als Profession*, 57.

[8] More about God's perfection in Böhme, in O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 149.

Thus, Lucifer's perfection was an existing reality, which should have been enough for him since God himself gave him the elevated status of perfection as a sufficient endowment for his being and his existence. There was, however, a condition for keeping the angelic perfection in its original state, and this was the requirement that archangels should keep close to God's heart.[9]

Consequently, their original perfection—which includes Lucifer's—was not only positional, but also moral. They were required to stay close to God's heart not only in terms of their creaturely standing or vicinity to the Godhead as God's archangels living in a created realm, but also as beings who deliberately choose to stay close to God's presence, standards, and principles. Lucifer, however, seems to have lost direction, so instead of keeping close to God, he purposefully distanced himself from him, as well as from his fellow archangels.[10] His fall disrupted the perfection of God's creation because its original beauty and serenity were turned into anger and darkness.[11] It is important to notice here that, despite Lucifer's turning away from God, the features of God's initial creation still survive within the created realm. Though corrupted themselves, beauty, love, and serenity are forced to coexist within creation with ugliness, hate, and darkness, so creation—in its fallen state—has them all.[12]

For Böhme, it is very important to establish the fundamental connection between the spirits of God and God himself. Thus, he writes that the seven spirits of God which can be found in angels—and the reference in this particular case is to the three archangels—are the actual origin of light and reason. Böhme uses the metaphor of birth in this respect, in the sense that the seven spirits of God beget light and reason, so the archangels are endowed with these two basic faculties which make them like God. Now, what is crucial to understand at this point lies with the type of connection between the spirits of God and God himself.[13] As far as Böhme is concerned, the seven spirits of God are tied together with God, but they are not God himself. To be sure, they are not higher than God, nor do they qualify as being more important than God. This is an indication that the archangels would most likely have the awareness of God's superiority despite being indwelled by the spirits of God. In other words, the seven spirits of God are only a part of the whole of God's being. Consequently, the seven spirits of God were created by God himself out of his own being as divine realities which interact between one another in a creative way.[14] They can be identified with God himself only in so far as we are aware of the fundamental difference between them and God, which resides in them being created by God, while God himself is uncreated.[15] Having established the key difference between the created spirits of God as a part of God's being and the uncreated God as the whole of his own being, Böhme approaches Lucifer's case which evidently defies the awareness of the difference between the spirits of God and God himself. It seems that the spirits of God which existed in Lucifer's being did not or would not accept their ontological inferiority to God's being.[16] Therefore, they appear to have seen their primacy over other beings, so Lucifer began to nurture bitterness within his inner constitution.[17]

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[9] Compare Arthur Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism. An Introduction to Western Esotericism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 108.

[10] See also Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 24.

[11] For more details about Lucifer's fall and its consequences, see Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 144.

[12] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:90, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 570.

[13] Details about the relationship between the Godhead and the spirits of God in Böhme can be found in Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism*, 455.

Böhme does not say here whether the seven spirits of God—which, as a result of God's creative action, can be found in archangels—are independently aware of themselves within Lucifer's being. It looks though as if they had some sort of awareness of their own, although it is equally true that only Lucifer began to feel hatred towards God despite God's love for him.[18] Regardless of whether the spirits of God in Lucifer were self-aware or not, what can be stated with certainty is the fact that they produced a fiery spirit in Lucifer.[19] Thus, it is very likely that the light and the reason which they produced in Lucifer's being were eventually darkened because of this fierce attitude. Lucifer's heart likely began to be filled with bitterness, darkness, and pride, which turned him into displaying an attitude of extreme conceitedness.[20] Böhme comes up with a rather peculiar comparison here, because he likens Lucifer's attitude with the behavior of a disdainful young woman:[21]

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[14] See also Sklar, *Blake*'s Jerusalem *as Visionary Theatre*, 29–30.

[15] In Böhme, God is uncreated mainly because his wisdom is uncreated. See Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 197.

[16] This is evident in creation. Having been created by means of Lucifer, man's world is inferior to God's creation. See Pierre Deghaye, "Jacob Boehme y sus seguidores", 289–332, in Antoine Faivre, Jacob Needleman (comps.), *Espiritualidad de los movimientos esotéricos modernos* (Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós Ibérica, 2000), 309.

[17] Lucifer's bitterness though had a crucial role in the creation of the world. See also Weeks, *Boehme*, 112.

[18] See also Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 130.

[19] Böhme's idea of Lucifer's fiery spirit seems to have influenced Hegel. See Reid, *Real Words*, 48.

[20] Compare Edel, *Die individuelle Substanz bei Böhme und Leibniz*, 81.

> The seven spirits, which are in an angel, which generate the light and understanding, they are bound and united with the whole God, that they should not qualify any other way, either higher or more vehemently, than God himself, but that there should be one and the same manner and way between them both. Seeing they are but a part or portion of the whole, and not the whole itself, for God has therefore created them out of himself, that they should qualify, operate or act in such a manner, form, and way as God himself does. But now the qualifying or fountain spirits in Lucifer did not so, but they seeing that they sat in the highest primacy or rank, they moved themselves so hard, and strongly, that the spirit which they generated was very fiery, and climbed up in the fountain of the heart, like a proud damsel or virgin.[22]

It should be said here that the attitude of pride which was found in Lucifer could have been positive when Lucifer was created, and it is this positive aspect of pride which seems to be underlined here by Böhme; at the same time, the seven spirits of God could have displayed a positive pride before Lucifer's creation, in the sense that they were proud of God's creation.[23] The turn of Lucifer's pride from positivity to negativity happened quite obviously during the time of creation, so the initial perfection of his creation was spoiled later.[24] This means that God's perfection is undoubtedly a specific feature of his own being, while the perfection of his spirits appears to have had the capacity of being altered since, after the creation of archangels, Lucifer turned away from God.[25] What is important, however, to realize at this point is that, before creation, the pride of the seven spirits of God seems to have been positive because it is this positivity of pride that led to God's activity of creation. There is, therefore, a sense in which the positive pride of the seven spirits of God can be compared to God's love.

Böhme feels the need to restate the fact that the seven spirits of God were with God before creation, and at this point he most probably refers to the creation of the universe, since they themselves were created by God. It is important to notice that the spirits of God gave birth to a son, and it appears that this son is the person of Lucifer, since he was meant to pair with the Son of God.[26] At the same time, as Böhme points out, the son of the seven spirits of God was intended to be very close to God's Son because of the common reality which they both share, namely light. Light comes from God, so it can also be found in the spirits of God, which is an indication of the fact that the light in Lucifer is the same light that exists in the Son of God.[27] Despite the fact that light is a common reality both in the Son of God and in Lucifer, Böhme still makes a slight though significant difference between the light which is in the Son of God and the light in Lucifer. Thus, he points out that the light which is found in the Son of God is God's light, so its status is characterized by the uncreated reality of God's existence.

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[21] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:38–49 (Baur only indicates 13:38 as the source of the material he takes from Böhme), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 570–571.

[22] Behmen, "Aurora", 123.

[23] More about Lucifer's pride in Böhme can be found in Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303–304.

[24] See also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23–24.

[25] Kirschner, *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 140.

In this sense, Böhme speaks of the great light of God, which seems to be ontologically different from the little light that can be found in Lucifer. There is an evident connection between the two lights, because the great light of God interacts with the little light of Lucifer.[28] It should be stressed here that the image which Böhme uses to present the interaction between God and Lucifer is that of parenthood and play.[29] To be more precise, he discloses that the great light of God plays with the little light of Lucifer, very much as a father plays with his son. The playful interaction between God's light and Lucifer's light is not only characterized by the vivid reality of play, but also by the active reality of love, which is the most fundamental feature of parenthood.[30] The light of God—Böhme argues—is in fact the heart of God, and the heart of God is full of God's love. The reality of love between God and Lucifer—or, by extension, between divinity and humanity—is not a one way manifestation; it is not only God who loves Lucifer. Lucifer himself is very fond of God according to Böhme, the "little son in Lucifer" initially wanted to be the "little brother" of God's heart:[31]

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[26] Lucifer is mainly presented as the Son of Light. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 152; O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 43; Huijs, *Gnosis*, 214, and Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 150. For an interesting parallel between Böhme's theology and African American culture, see Loren L. Qualls, *Dark Language. Post Rebellion Fiction: The Continued Journey of African American Literature* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), 14.

[27] Compare Pierre Deghaye, "'Gedulla' et 'Gebura'. Le 'Dictionnaire biblique et emblématique' de Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1776)", 233–248, in Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, and Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron (eds.), *Ésotérisme, gnoses et imaginaire symbolique. Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 241.

[28] This interaction eventually led to "intra-divine dissension". See Wasserstrom, *Religion after Religion*, 210.

[29] More about God's play with creation in Böhme, in Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, 61.

[30] For details about the idea of parenthood in mystical theology, including Böhme, see Florenskiĭ, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 240.

> If the qualifying or fountain spirits had moved, qualified, or acted gently and lovely, as they did before they become creaturely, as they were universally in God before the creation, then had they generated also a gentle, lovely, mild, and meek son in them, which would have been like to the son of God, and then the light in Lucifer and the light of the son of God had been one thing, one qualifying, operating, acting, and affecting, one and the same lovely kissing, embracing, and struggling. For the great light, which is the heart of God, would have played meekly, mildly, and lovingly with the small light in Lucifer, as with a young son, for the little son in Lucifer should have been the dear little brother of the heart of God.[32]

The mutual interaction and love between God and Lucifer is characteristic of the initial form of the relationship between divinity and creation.[33] Böhme underlines the fact that the very scope of creation was the mutual love between God on the one hand, and whatever he was to create on the other. The first manifestation of God's creation was the coming into being of archangels, who were created for this very purpose, namely that God should love them and they should love him back. According to Böhme, God is multifaceted in his qualities and incomprehensible in his diversity—in other words, God is an extremely diverse being who wanted to create equally diverse beings, who would be capable of displaying his love. Böhme even writes that there was a "love play"[34] between God and the archangels, which was intended to show God's incomprehensible diversity both in itself and in his creation.[35]

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[31] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:40–41, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571.

[32] Behmen, "Aurora", 123.

[33] Böhme's notion of mutual love left a powerful impression on the works of Jane Leade. See Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross. Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 33.

[34] For more information about play and love in Böhme, see Gilya Gerda Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years. From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 43.

[35] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571.

It seems that Baur was interested in Böhme's presentation of the relationship between God and his creation for at least one reason, which has to do with the dualism of this particular relationship based on love. When it comes to love, it is described as essentially dualistic, which means that it is manifested between two beings—in this respect, it is a love-play.[36] The dualistic nature of love is seen here, in Böhme's presentation, both by means of the game between God and creation on the one hand, and the light which is shared by God and the archangels on the other. At the same time, the very idea of light is fundamental for Gnosticism as it denotes the realm of God, who is the ultimate source of light. Baur is right in pointing to Böhme's presentation of light as the source of God's creation, because light is not only the origin of creation, but also the main feature thereof. There is, however, a dualism of light, since God's light is presented as the great light and Lucifer's light—or the light of creation—is seen as the little light.[37] Clearly Böhme's dualism of love and light did not escape Baur's careful reading, who presented it at length as a means to show that, despite his uncreated existence, God cannot be separated from his creation.

Lucifer and the Idea of Light

One should notice here again Böhme's use of the noun *Inqualierung* and the corresponding verb *inqualieren*.[38] Neither the noun nor the verb are very clear when it comes to finding a proper meaning for them in the context of Böhme's thought; nevertheless, what seems to be evident is the fact that the noun is used in connection with the light which can be found in Lucifer. Thus, Böhme notices that Lucifer's light is some sort of *Inqualierung*, which for the time being says nothing about how one should understand either the light which is in Lucifer or Lucifer himself. Lucifer's light, however, is a reality that can easily be compared with the Son of God, because Böhme appears to support the idea that Lucifer's light and the Son of God are either identical or at least very similar:[39]

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[36] See also Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 169.

[37] Böhme's idea of light applied to Lucifer had a direct influence on Hegel. See Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, 49.

[38] It seems that *Inqualierung* refers to the pursuit of truth and its corresponding effort, even torment. See Charles D. Keyes, *Brain Mystery Light and Dark. The Rhythm and Harmony of Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 97.

> In the middle, or central fountain or wellspring, which is the heart, where the birth rises up, the astringent or harsh quality rubs itself with the bitter and hot, and there the light kindles, which is the son, of which it is always impregnated in its body, and that enlightens and makes it living. Now that light in Lucifer was so fair, bright, and beautiful, that he excelled the bright form of heaven, and in that light was perfect understanding, for all the seven qualifying or fountain spirits generate the same light.[40]

This comparison should not be taken literally since Lucifer's light is a created reality, while the Son of God is—at least in traditional Christian theology—part of the uncreated being of God. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of the two is an indication that, in Böhme, creation and God are equally important for the purposes of theology, in the sense that one should understand creation through the lens of divinity, while accepting the reality of God in natural terms. Thus, Lucifer's light and the Son of God both share the same importance since Böhme placed them one next to the other; however, it should be stressed that they both are described as *Inqualierung*, which is said to be *Infizierung*.[41] Now, since *Infizierung* means infection, the word seems to present us with the idea of action and movement. The light of Lucifer and the Son of God are both realities which appear to be characterized by means of action and movement. Neither creation nor God is static; they are both in an active process of movement which is called *Inqualierung*. So *Inqualierung* can refer to the movement of the qualities which define both divinity and humanity, or God and creation.[42]

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[39] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:33–34, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571. There is, however, a sharp opposition between Lucifer and the Son of God, although they seem to share the same essence. In other words, *Inqualierung* can also refer to the essence of opposition which presupposes a dualistic movement from one reality to the other and vice-versa. See also Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 158–159.

[40] Behmen, "Aurora", 122.

[41] Compare Anja Elisabeth Schoene, *"Ach, wäre fern, was ich liebe!" Studien zur Inzestthematik in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende, von Ibsen bis Musil* (Würzburg; Königshausen und Neumann, 1997), 34.

[42] *Inqualierung* can "refer to Böhme's dynamic conception of quality". At the same time, it can point to a "movement of quality" which drives the quality towards its own negativity. Thus, the quality can maintain itself only in a state of perpetual conflict because of its negative nature (described through the word *Qual*, which has a wide range of meanings

Thus, the qualities of creation and God find themselves in a state of permanent unrest, which produces an intense activity with manifestations which define both creation and God through one another. Creation is defined by means of God and God through creation; for Böhme it is crucially important to underline that neither God nor creation is static and hence positive. They are both in a constant state of movement, agitation, and unrest, which defines them as conflictual realities.[43] God and creation, however, are not in conflict with each other; each is in conflict with itself. It is true that God and Lucifer eventually reached a conflict because of Lucifer's fall; however, in Böhme this seems to be the result of God's *Inqualierung*, or the divine unrest which defines divinity through its inner conflict or negative nature. This does not necessarily mean that God is the author of evil, which evidently affected Lucifer's being; it only means that, while God is not the author of evil, the idea of negativity can be found within God's inner nature.[44]

This negativity or perpetual unrest which can be said to exist even in God's nature, according to Böhme, was transmitted to God's creation. This is why Lucifer's nature, or his light as Böhme puts it, is also characterized by negativity and can be defined as a conflict with itself, but also with God. Consequently, the idea of *Inqualierung* manages to define Böhme's understanding of the concept of Lucifer's fall as the normal consequence of his internal unrest, which is also the manifestation—within the reality of creation—of God's inner conflicting qualities.[45] Since in Böhme God is both severity and love, there must be a conflict between these two divine qualities, which reflect God's inner nature without any reference to the possibility of evil as originating in God's being. At the same time, the manifestation of evil in creation does not postulate God's authorship of evil despite the existence of conflicting qualities within his being.[46]

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including the ideas of anguish, distress, and pain). See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 159.

[43] More about the movement of creation in Böhme in O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 93.

[44] See also Lee C. Barrett, "Jacob Böhme: The Ambiguous Legacy of Speculative Passion", 43–63, in Jon Stewart (eds.), *Kierkegaard and the Renaissance and Modern Traditions*, Tome 2: Theology (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 55.

[45] More about God's inner conflict in Böhme, see C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959, reprinted 1990), 11.

[46] For details about the notion of *Inqualierung* in Böhme as understood by Hegel, Georg W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. by George din Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88, and Andrew Haas, *Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 296, and Önay Sözer, "Grenze und

For Böhme, God is the origin of creation, not of the evil which can be found in it. This is why he points to the fact that it was God's desire to create angels in a way which allowed for the interaction between God's qualities or spirits. By creating angels out of his own qualities, God laid the basis of a "love play",[47] as Böhme calls it; this game though is the result between God's activity and the actions of his created angels. At the end of the day, it seems to be constant and mutual connectivity between God and his creation, which is Böhme's way to suggest that there is an indissoluble liaison between divinity and humanity. He shows again that there is difference between God and his creation in the sense that God is the originator of creation,[48] while creation is the result of his actions; nevertheless, the spirits and the light of God can be found to a considerable degree within the created angelic order. In order to differentiate between God and his creation, Böhme writes that the little spirits and the little light of angels were intended to be exact replicas of the spirits and light of the Son. Thus, as Böhme writes, both angels and God's Son were meant to "play" before God's heart:[49]

> To this end God the Father has created the angels, that as he is manifold and various in his qualities, and in his alteration or variegation is incomprehensible in his sport or scene of love, so the little spirits also, or the little lights of the angels, which are as the son of God, should play or sport very gently or lovely in the great light before the heart of God, that the joy

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Schranke—Das Mal des Endlichen", 173–185, in Andreas Arndt, Christian Iber (Hrsg.), *Hegel's Seinlogik. Interpretation und Perspektiven* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 176.

[47] Böhme's "love play" became essential for various humanistic and social disciplines, among which psychoanalysis and psychology. See David Bennett, "Sexual Revolutions: Towards a Brief History, from the Fall of Man to the Present", 35–52, in Gottfried Heuer (eds.), *Sexual Revolutions. Psychoanalysis, History, and the Father* (Hove: Routledge, 2011), 48.

[48] The notion of origination is crucial here, especially for Hegel, who sees creation as a self-realization of the spirit in the sense that God empties himself/itself because of its *Qual*, a fundamental urge or desire. See also Brian Schroeder, *Altared Ground. Levinas, History, and Violence* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 86.

[49] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:42, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571. The most important aspect which lies at the foundation of Böhme's "love play" seems to be the idea of becoming, since there is a constant interaction between God's Son and angels. Compare Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle. Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), xi.

> in the heart of God might here be increased, and that so there might be a holy sport, scene, or play in God.[50]

In other words, God's Son was intended to be so interwoven with angels that virtually no difference should have been noticed between God's essence and that of creation. The great light of God should have been perceived as being identical to the little light of angels and the other way around; as a matter of fact, the creation of angels was understood to be a vehicle whereby the joy which exists in God's heart should be increased.

At the same time, the love play between the Son and angels should have been so full of joy that an identical game was expected to emerge in God's heart. Böhme underlines that this game is not to be taken lightly; it is a holy game of love and its initial purpose was not only to connect God with his creation, but also to increase the joy within God's own being as a result of seeing his creation—and especially his angels—in a permanent state of joy.[51] Having pointed out the importance of the holy love play between God and his creation, Böhme resumes his discussion about light. Light is presented in natural terms, meaning that it seems as if light were presented as a created reality. According to Böhme, light originates in the seven spirits of God, so it sprang from the very heart of God. This kind of light seems to be the light which was later ascribed to angels because it was meant to be joyous before God's light.[52]

So there is an uncreated light which is God's and a created light which belongs to angels having been created by the spirits of God; the two lights, however, were intended to be like a family. God's light is seen as the mother, while the light of angels is the child; in Böhme, they were supposed to behave as the mother treats her child, with heartfelt love and joyous kisses.[53] Böhme's image is vividly mundane and very naturalistic; his comparison between God and creation being likened to the image of a mother who plays with her child is yet another attempt to convey the strong relationship between God and creation.[54] Actually, there should be no distinction between God and creation if we look at this relationship from the perspective of nature. Thus, Böhme indicates that God and his creation should become a "gentle and loving taste":[55]

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[50] Behmen, "Aurora", 123.

[51] For details about the connection between angels and joy, see also Weeks, *Boehme*, 85.

[52] See also mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23.

[53] More about the family image (and especially God as mother) which was applied by Böhme to the relationship between angels and God, in Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92–93.

[54] Regardless of whether Böhme's mother image is applied to God or Adam, the main idea which such an image conveys is that of innocence and lack of corruption. See Timothy Morton, "The Plantation of Wrath", 64–85, in Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (eds.),

> The seven spirits of nature in an angel should play and rise up gently in God their father, as they had done before their creaturely being, and rejoice in their newborn son, which they have generated out of themselves, which is the light and understanding of their body, and that light should rise very gently or mildly in the heart of God, and rejoice in the light of God, as a child with its mother, and so there should be a hearty loving, and friendly kissing, a very meek and pleasant taste or relish.[56]

The idea of taste indicates uniqueness, and the reality of God's connection with his creation is so powerful that one cannot distinguish between them. Thus, God becomes one with his creation, so that they are one single and natural reality. As both God and creation are characterized by the seven spirits of God, Böhme writes that each spirit should bear witness to this wonderful union between God and creation by happy sounds,[57] which in Böhme take the form of songs and ringing, praises and blissful joy. In other words, all the qualities of God should rejoice as a token of God's union with creation to the point that no real distinction can be identified between the two. In order for this to happen, each spirit of God must do its job and further God's work as God himself. This is an indication that not only God is supposed to pursue the perfect union with creation; creation itself should look forward to becoming one with its creator.[58]

Should this happen, then the seven spirits of God, which lay at the foundation of creation, could be said to have reached a perfect mutual knowledge of themselves. When this happens, Böhme writes that they are "inqualified" with God the Father, which means that they now find themselves in a movement towards God the Father despite their created nature as compared to the Father's uncreated existence. This is to say that even if God has an

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Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650–1830. From Revolution to Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 67.

[55] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:43–44, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571. Compare Weeks, *Boehme*, 76.

[56] Behmen, "Aurora", 123.

[57] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 107.

[58] For details about the relationship between creation and its creator in Böhme, but also how it influenced later theology and philosophy, see Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers*, 61.

uncreated existence while the spirits of God are created realities, they should move towards each other. God is their father and he moves towards them; what they should do in return is turn themselves towards him. The connection between God and his creation is presented again in natural terms, such as seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling, and hearing.[59] In other words, creation must use all its capacities to turn to God in spite of its natural reality which pushes it away from its creator.[60]

Lucifer and Opposition against God

Creation, however, did not turn to God. In order to explain what creation did in not going towards God, Böhme speaks again about the spirits of God, which are to be found in creation. Thus, instead of turning to God, the spirits of creation chose a different path and decided to turn against God.[61] The first step was to rise against God in what Böhme calls "a powerful outburst", as if a destructive flame had been ignited by them. This decision to turn against God is a manifestation against the natural law, because creation was supposed to love God and stay in permanent connection with him, not to break the bonds with its creator. In turning against God, the spirits of creation acted the opposite way God the Father would have done. In fact, Böhme shows that God the Father was always reaching towards his creation; it was creation itself that decided not to stay close to the creator any longer.[62]

The second step consisted of igniting the saltpeter of the *corpus*, so the material body was "set on fire" from within itself. Creation has a body, or a material form, by virtue of being the result of God's creative act, and turning this body against God resulted in the birth of a "son" who perceived himself as "overtriumphant". This "son" appears to be Lucifer himself, because he shares with God both the qualities of acerbity and sweetness. However, as Böhme points out, he was severe, harsh, dark, and cold in his acerbity, but also burning, bitter, and fiery in his sweetness.[63] In other words, while God the Father had both his acerbity and sweetness (or his negativity and positivity) work for the purposes of love in creating Lucifer (and the whole of creation for that matter), Lucifer did things the other way around. He therefore decided to turn his acerbity and sweetness (or his negativity and positivity) against love, so that in all his inner qualities he nurtured hatred and revolt, rather than love and peace as God the Father did.[64] Lucifer also had the quality of sound, as Böhme shows, but his sound—or maybe one could even say his voice—became a fiery noise full of toughness and at the same time, his original love turned itself into arrogant enmity, which he directed against God:[65]

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[59] Compare Johann W. Ritter, *Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776–1810) on the Nature of Science and Art of Nature*, trans. Jocelyn Holland (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 257.

[60] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 571–572.

[61] In Böhme though rebellion against God seems to be a necessary aspect of the development of creation. See Burke, *The Concept of Justice*, 198.

[62] See G.C. Berkouwer, *Man. The Image of God*, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962, reprinted 1984), 180.

[63] Compare Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 24.

> And the heart of God should now unite and qualify with the heart of the angel, but that could not be, for there was now hard against soft and sour against sweet, and dark against light, and fire against a pleasant gentle warmth, and a hard knocking or rumbling against a loving melodious song.[66]

The third step is the very end-result of the spirits' revolt against God, and Böhme presents it by using the analogy of marriage. God and his creation—represented here by Lucifer—were meant to be like a groom and his bride, namely they should have entertained a constant relationship of profound love. As this did not happen because of creation's revolt against God, Lucifer turned itself against God, so he was no longer a loving bride.[67] Consequently, he became like an angry bride, and in doing so, he ignited the seven spirits of nature against God himself. One should notice here that Böhme no longer speaks about the spirits of God or the source-spirits of creation, but about the spirits of nature. Having ignited the spirits of nature against God, Lucifer looked like an arrogant beast, which began to think that being above God was no longer an option, but a necessity. Lucifer's revolt against God resulted in having his love grow cold, so he was no longer capable of reaching God's heart.[68]

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[64] See also Hans L. Martensen, *Between Hegel and Kierkegaard. Hans L. Martensen's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Curtis L. Thompson, David J. Kangas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 241.

[65] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:48, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572. See Also check Weeks, *Boehme*, 87.

[66] Behmen, "Aurora", 124.

[67] See F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1969, first published 1960), 49.

[68] Read Serge Boulgakov, *La lumière sans déclin*, trans. Constantin Andronikof (Lausanne: Editions L'Age d'homme, 1990), 166.

This also happened because God and Lucifer ceased to enjoy a loving relationship based on a harmonious will. Lucifer's will began to antagonize God, so what he now had was a rebellious will which pushed him further way from his creator. His heart ceased to feel with God, so it failed to connect itself to God's heart. In Böhme, the notion of heart seems to have a high intensity attached to it, because he describes the activity of both God's heart and Lucifer's heart as "boiling".[69] Both hearts were, therefore, boiling, but with different purposes. As Böhme writes, while God's heart was boiling gently, purely, and lovingly for his creation, Lucifer's heart began to boil darkly, severely, coldly, and fiercely against his creator:[70]

> Here now stood the kindled bride in the seventh nature-spirit, like a proud beast, now she supposed she was beyond or above God, nothing was like her now, love grew cold, the heart of God would not touch it, for there was a contrary will or opposition betwixt them. The heart of God moved very meekly and lovingly, and the angel moved very darkly, hard, cold, and fiery.[71]

It is interesting to notice here that, in Böhme, God cannot be detached from his creation, or vice versa. God has always wanted to stay close to his creation, while creation was intended from the very beginning to depend on God. The relationship between creator and creation continues to be quite close in Böhme even after the latter's fall and—as it has already become clear—despite the latter's fall. Lucifer's antagonistic will and his rebellious attitude did not destroy his heart; they only changed its direction from going towards God to turning away from him. The reality of the heart, however, continues to exist—although in different forms—in both God and Lucifer, so the creator and his creation continue to be bound by the same reality, which is the "boiling" heart, even if Lucifer resented God's heart.[72]

As both God and Lucifer have boiling hearts, they should have "inqualified", namely they should have interacted in a way which, despite their fundamental differences given by God's uncreated existence and Lucifer's created constitution, was supposed to make them one single unity bound by the same purposes. The connection between the two hearts should have been love in all respects: love coming from God to Lucifer, but also the other way around. Now, however, as the reality of love between God and Lucifer is exclusively unidirectional, that is from God to Lucifer—as Lucifer's attitude to God is based on hatred and revolt—the original "inqualification" of the two hearts is no longer possible, namely between the positive heart of God and the originally positive heart of Lucifer. Following Lucifer's fall, however, a second inqualification becomes possible between God's positive heart and Lucifer's negative heart, as a perpetual exchange between two opposing entities within the same reality.[73] Böhme explains the incompatibility of a loving relationship between God and Lucifer by showing that Lucifer's hatred and revolt changed his entire reality and the way his existence manifests itself in connection with God's being. In so doing, he lists a series of antagonisms, which disclose Lucifer's change of heart from love to hatred compared to the reality of God's loving heart.[74]

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[69] See Rosemary Bechler, " 'Triall by What Is Contrary'. Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic", 93–114, in Valerie Grosvenor Myer (eds.), *Samuel Richardson. Passion and Prudence* (London: Vision Press, 1986), 100.

[70] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:47, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572.

[71] Behmen, "Aurora", 123–124.

[72] See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23.

Lucifer's attitude therefore is harsh, sour, dark, and fiery, while God's is mild, sweet, bright, and warm. This is why Böhme points out that Lucifer's hatred of God turned into a relationship which is like severity against meekness, sourness against sweetness, darkness against light, and fire against "loving warmth".[75] At the same time, the same relationship can also be described in auditive terms, so Lucifer's hateful attitude towards God's love is like a "tough pounding against a lovely song". At this point, Böhme launches a person rhetorical "attack" against Lucifer as if he were inquiring about Lucifer's guilt concerning the damaged relationship he has with God: "Listen, Lucifer, who is to be blamed for the fact that you became a devil?" Böhme's question needs no answer as it is quite obvious that the blame falls on Lucifer.[76] Thus, in order to strengthen the impression that Lucifer is the culprit, Böhme asks another question to which the answer can only be negative: "Is it God, according to your lies?" Nevertheless, he comes up with an equally personal involvement in providing us with the evident answer: "Oh, no! It is you, you alone, the source-spirits in your *corpus*, which is you yourself and which gave birth to such a little son like you."[77]

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[73] This is a permanent struggle which defines God as complete otherness in opposition with created and finite material nature since God can be God (as a spiritual reality) only when compared with the world (as a material reality). This understanding of Böhme is specific to Hegel, see Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit. Jacob Boehme's Influence on Hegel", 15–35, in Perkins (eds.), *History and System*, 29–30.

[74] The reality of the opposition between God and Lucifer reveals the otherness of God and Lucifer to each other. See Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, 49.

[75] See Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History and across Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1993), 50. Also read O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 41, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 68.

[76] Weeks, *Boehme*, 37.

In his tirade against Lucifer, Böhme makes it clear that Lucifer cannot even hint at the possibility that God should be guilty for his wretched relationship with his creator.[78] Thus, Lucifer is simply not entitled to say that God ignited the saltpeter from which he created Lucifer himself. On the contrary, Böhme underlines once again that the movement, actions, and consequences of hatred and revolt originated in Lucifer's source-spirits. He also points out that this unfortunate state of affairs was preceded by the blissful reality of Lucifer's existence as heavenly prince and one of God's kings.[79] It is obvious that Lucifer underwent a dramatic change from a situation in which he was placed on top of the entire creation in the vicinity of God to the unfortunate context of his change of heart which pushed him far away from his creator. It is now Baur's turn to ask one of theology's most common questions, which is meant to search for an answer to explain the origin of evil.[80] Having noticed Lucifer's most high position in the order of creation as prince and one of God's kings, but also his perfection which was proved by Lucifer's heart being situated in the very center of God's light as a confirmation of his elevated status, Baur asks—as he follows Böhme's argument—how it was possible that a "completely different son" be born in Lucifer.[81] Lucifer's transformation turned him into a being which was totally opposed to the person of God's true Son, so the issue here—according to Baur—is to find the proper explanation which accounts for such a dramatic change. Finding an answer to this question seems to be of paramount importance for Baur because it would later explain the origin of nature's dualistic constitution.[82]

The existence of light and darkness, good and evil, severity and meekness, but also all natural realities which find themselves in total opposition can therefore be explained despite the fact that they have all originated in one and same source. Thus, the reality of nature can be accounted for in dualistic terms which can also allow for the notion of God or divinity to be accommodated within a natural perspective on the world and on man's existence. The very source of creation seems to be dualistic in nature, and it appears Baur's intention goes in this direction, namely to develop an argument about God's essential dualism which reflected itself in the reality of creation.[83] Consequently, the dualism of creation can theoretically be the result of God's dualistic nature, although practically it seems to have nothing to do with God. God may well be dualistic in his being, since acerbity and love are features of his inner essence, but he manifested itself outwardly through love, which is the only feeling that God has towards his creation. Love externalizes God's being into material nature.[84]

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[77] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:48–49, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572.

[78] See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

[79] Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Angels*, 73.

[80] For a view which supports Kabbalistic influences on Böhme's theory about the origin of evil, see Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 32.

[81] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572.

[82] The dualism of nature in Böhme was noticed by Schelling, see Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 218, n. 108.

This is why creation itself is the result of God's love despite God's dualistic essence. On the other hand, while creation was made out of love and initially returned the feeling of love in its relationship with God, it was creation which later developed, nurtured, and then displayed a total opposition to God through Lucifer's hate. So, while God showed love towards creation despite his essential dualism (one could even label this theoretical dualism), creation began to relate itself to God in a dualistic way through love and then through hate (which, of course, seems to be a more practical dualism), which ended in the prevalence of evil throughout the whole creation.[85]

The dramatism as well as the radicalism of Lucifer's transformation is depicted by Böhme by means of the idea of birth; as a matter of fact, it is a new birth which turned Lucifer into the very opposite being he was meant to be by creation.[86] Böhme seems to imply here a technique whereby he reverses the whole meaning of the biblical idea of the "new birth". While in the New Testament the new birth implies one's transformation from spiritual darkness to spiritual light, in Böhme it is the other way around. Thus, through this new birth, Lucifer makes a leap backwards, from spiritual light to spiritual darkness. The idea of the new birth as applied to Lucifer suggest the inception of a new life within Lucifer's own being; as if a new son had been born in Lucifer's own created existence.[87] This is why Böhme writes about the birth of a new son in the very heart of Lucifer, but it appears that between this new son and Lucifer himself there a total identification in the sense that the new son and Lucifer are indeed the same created entity. Lucifer's new attitude—rendered by Böhme through the idea of the new son—developed within his created existence.[88] Following the same logic, Böhme underscores this particular fact, namely that the realm of creation—in this case, Lucifer's being—was the very source of the birth of the new son. In Böhme's words, everything happened "through the whole *corpus*", namely in the very reality of the body, which is the quintessence of creation:[89]

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[83] See Grimstad, *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism in Thomas Mann*'s Doktor Faustus, 42.

[84] Compare Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 34.

[85] See also Heinz Heimsoeth, *The Six Great Themes of Western Metaphysics and the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Ramon J. Betanzos (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 59.

[86] See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 27; Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 150, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 88.

[87] It seems that the idea of a "new birth" or a "second birth" of Lucifer is a metaphor of man's capacity to access a special kind of knowledge. See Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, 8.

> For the birth of the new son in the heart of Lucifer penetrated through the whole body, and was glorified from the Son of God, which was without, distinct from the body, and was in a friendly manner welcomed with the greatest beauty of heaven, according to the beauty of God the son, and it was to him as a loving heart of propriety, with which the whole deity qualified or operated.[90]

While God is a spiritual reality which exists completely outside the body, creation—Lucifer included—has its existence within the body. Despite the fact that there God and his creation are such different realities given the latter's bodily existence, there seems to be a connection in Böhme between the birth of the new son in Lucifer—or his dramatic transformation from light to darkness—and the being of God's Son. Thus, while the Son of God is totally outside the *corpus*, Lucifer's body accepted the existence of another son, or a totally different attitude, since he existed in relationship with God's Son.[91] Böhme does not elaborate any further; he does however write that the birth of the new son happened "from God's Son". It appears though that this is not a means to point to the origin of the new son in Lucifer as if it came from the Son of God, but rather an attempt to show that Lucifer's existence originates in the person of God's Son. The connection between God's Son and Lucifer's being is important for Böhme because—despite Lucifer's fall from light to darkness through the birth of the new son—nothing can undo the reality that he does indeed originate in God.[92]

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[88] See Huijs, *Gnosis*, 214.

[89] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:102, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572–573. Compare O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 114.

[90] Behmen, "Aurora", 130.

[91] See also Hallacker, "On Angelic Bodies: Some Philosophical Discussions in the Seventeenth Century", 201–214, in Iribarren and Lenz (eds.), *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 206.

Böhme reiterates here that, while the birth of the new son happened through "the penetration of the whole body"—most likely a reference to the extent of Lucifer's transformation—Lucifer's initial condition before the fall resembled the very existence of God's Son almost to complete identification. Consequently, though God's Son had his existence wholly outside the *corpus* and was therefore glorified, Lucifer—whose existence was possible only within the *corpus*—was still endowed with the "greatest beauty of heaven" following the original pattern of the beauty of God's Son.[93]

This was in fact God's intention with his creation, that is to be God's beloved possession; Lucifer thus was meant to be God's loving heart, with which—or rather with whom—the entire Godhead was supposed to "inqualify" or to interact through a permanent and mutual movement towards each other despite the most fundamental differences between God's uncreated constitution and Lucifer's created existence. In other words, Lucifer was intended to be like a "beautiful bride" and a "prince of God"—certainly the most beautiful of all of God's creation because of his origination in God's love.[94] Lucifer was created to be the "loving son of creatures", or the pinnacle of God's creation. Böhme's discussion about Lucifer's initial state and his subsequent transformation from light to darkness should not be understood—Baur warns—exclusively as a total change of Lucifer's being.

In other words, the birth of the new son in Lucifer's own being—although dramatic and radical concerning Lucifer's attitude towards God—cannot and should not be thought as a complete consummation. What Baur seems to have in mind here is the fact that, despite his fall and change of heart towards God, but also despite his transformation from God's archangel into the devil, Lucifer still remained God's creature and one of the angels originating in the very being of God as a result of God's creative act.[95] This is why Baur emphasizes that, in order to understand Böhme's perspective on Lucifer's being, one must be aware of his profound depth. Baur also points out that Böhme's presentation of the birth of the new son in Lucifer's heart should not be understood as one of Böhme's common variations in presenting his ideas. According to Baur,

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[92] Szulakowska, *The Alchemy of Light*, 180.

[93] See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation by Jakob Böhme*, 24–25.

[94] Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 143.

[95] In Böhme, the image of Lucifer as God's creation serves to describe Adam, or man in general, within the same lines. In other words, Lucifer is an image of Adam (of man). See Weeks, *Boehme*, 120.

Böhme's thought goes much deeper, so his understanding of Lucifer acquires new connotations.[96]

Lucifer and Rebellion

Lucifer is undoubtedly a special angel. Having been created from the same mold as the other angels, he was nevertheless a being who could not follow the communal line of thought, morality, and action. Böhme points out that he had the same "everlasting nature" as the other angels, and in this particular respect his divine origin is evident. As his being had its point of origin the very nature of God himself, Böhme writes that he was in fact part of the host of angels which God created as an "everlasting and indissoluble" group of beings.[97] They were all meant to live and stay in Paradise, an idea which not only takes Böhme closer to the traditional tenets of Christianity, but also explains his understanding of the concept of nature in this particular case. It seems that, concerning the creation of angels, the idea of nature as the result of God's creation is not necessarily and exclusively spiritual. Having been brought into existence by God, nature seems to have—at least to some degree—a material connotation attached to it, in the sense that angels were not entirely spiritual beings. At any rate, even if they were so, they do seem to represent God's entire creation in relationship with its creator, so they also speak about humanity as God's self-revelation[98] as a dialectical process.[99]

The notion of nature's everlasting or permanent constitution may well express Böhme's conviction that the reality of creation will endure forever in its natural form.[100] It is, however, quite difficult to draw firm conclusions based on Böhme's rather unclear accounts even though the basis of his argument—the conflict between creation and its creator—is more than evident. What is not so evident though has to do with his next remark, namely that Lucifer—as part of the everlasting host of angels—witnessed the birth of "the other *principii*". To make this even more unclear, Böhme explains that these *principii*—from which Lucifer's existence cannot be detached and in which he should have remained—are, in fact, "the holy Godhead":[101]

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[96] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:103–104, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 572–573.

[97] More about Lucifer's eternity in Ernst Osterkamp, *Lucifer. Stationen eines Motivs* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 80.

[98] See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 22.

[99] God's self-revelation goes hand in hand with God's reconciliation and they are both completed in eternity. See Daniel J. Peterson, "Jacob Boehme and Paul Tillich: A Reassessment of the Mystical Philosopher and Systematic Theologian", 225–234, in *Religious Studies* 42.2 (2006): 226.

[100] If creation is eternal, it means that it should also be understood as some sort of emanation from God. See Arthur McCalla, "Illuminism and French Romantic Philosophies of History", 253–268, in Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (eds.), *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 254.

> (…) [Lucifer], as well as other angels, was created out of the eternal nature, out of the eternal indissoluble band, and has also stood in paradise, also felt and seen the birth of the holy deity, the birth of the second principle, of the heart of God, and the confirmation of the Holy Ghost, his food should have been the word of the Lord, and therein should have continued an angel.[102]

In other words, Lucifer seems to have been a witness to the birth of the holy Godhead, so he "felt and saw" the birth of God's heart and—as Böhme puts it—the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. At this point, one cannot know for sure what the timeline of creation is according to Böhme since Lucifer, the created angel, witnesses the birth of the holy Godhead. One possible explanation which does not disrupt the logic of creation—in the sense that God, the creator, acted towards the coming into being of its creation—could refer to the fact that, in Böhme, the holy Godhead does not refer to the very essence of God's being, but rather to outpouring of God's actions in the reality of creation itself.[103] If this is the case, then Lucifer witnessed—as it were—its own creation, the coming into existence of his own being as the result of God's intervention for this particular purpose. Thus, one could then say that Lucifer witnessed the birth of the holy Godhead in himself, in his own being, since he is indeed the result of God's nature being reflected in his individual existence. At any rate, it is important to notice Lucifer's dependence on God; according to Böhme, Lucifer was an angel—and his was God's original intention creating him as well as other angels—because he found nourishment in the Word of God. Böhme writes that his nourishment came from "*verbo Domini*", and it seems that this sustained him in existing as God's creation as an angel.[104]

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[101] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:69, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 573–574. The juxtaposition of principles and the idea of Godhead in Böhme caused Hegel to accuse Böhme of a mythological understanding of religion based on pictures and images (rather than concepts and ideas). See Mills, *The Unconscious Abyss*, 29–30.

[102] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 31.

[103] This confirms again that, in Böhme, creation can be conceived as an emanation from God. See James Hodkinson, "The Cosmic-Symphonic: Novalis, Music, and Universal Discourse", 13–26, in Siobhán Donovan and Robin Elliott (eds.), *Music and Literature in German Romanticism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House/Boydell and Brewer, 2004), 16.

Then, if we are to believe Böhme, something happened and the culprit seems to be Lucifer's self consciousness or awareness. Thus, once he realized what his position in the order of creation was—and he saw that he had been placed by God on top of it—Lucifer appears to have had a radical change of heart. He not only saw that he was a prince; he understood his close connection with what Böhme calls "the first principle" in the sense that he was "in the first *principio*".[105] Lucifer must have been fully aware of his very close relationship with God and yet—as Böhme renders it—he disregarded it. What Lucifer did in fact was willingly to ignore "the birth of God's heart"—and it is quite clear that Böhme refers to Lucifer's existence as an angel due to God's characteristics being poured into his creation—as well as his "gentle and loving qualification", possibly a reference to God's active relationship with his creation.

Consequently, Lucifer decided to become a totally different Lord "in the first *principio*",[106] so he somehow reached the conclusion that it would be better for him to undergo a radical change of attitude towards his creator while still being so powerfully connected to God's innermost characteristics. Lucifer performed a radical alteration of his relationship with God and, in doing so, he disregarded God's gentleness—and, quite obviously, also his own—and adopted a fiery attitude.[107] Böhme writes that he wanted to "qualify in the power of fire", which is an indication that the mutuality between Lucifer and God suddenly turned into a fierce reality. As a result, his imagination was cut loose, in the sense that he was no longer willing to keep it under control. Thus, unlike the other angels who used their imagination to consolidate God's purposes—Baur speaks of the "will of the Holy Trinity within the Godhead" as he borrows the phrase from Böhme[108]—Lucifer preferred to act against God's intentions, and the vehicle whereby he managed to reach his goals was his own imagination.[109] The wrong use of imagination caused Lucifer to distance himself from God.[110] In fact, Böhme insists that his faulty application of his created faculty of imagination made Lucifer unable to feed from the word of God:[111]

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[104] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:67, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 573–574. In Böhme, Lucifer's image as God's most magnificent angel mirrors the existence of man. Compare Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 44.

[105] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 43.

[106] Also read Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 172.

[107] In accepting the reality of fire, Lucifer rejected the counter-balancing light. See Harris, *Gnosticism*, 55.

[108] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:69–70. Baur inserts this phrase in Böhme's original quotation between brackets, so the contemporary reader may be mislead into thinking that these are in fact Böhme's words. See Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 573.

> But he [Lucifer] saw that he was a prince, standing in the first principle, and so despised the birth of the heart of God, and the soft and very lovely qualification thereof, and meant to be a very potent and terrible lord in the first principle, and would qualify [or work] in the strength of the fire, he despised the meekness of the heart of God. He would not set his imagination therein, [or his thoughts upon it,] and therefore he could not be fed from the word of the Lord, and so his light went out, whereupon presently he became a Loathsomeness in Paradise, and was spewed out of his princely throne, with all his legions that stuck to him, [or depended on him].[112]

It seems therefore that bad imagination turns creation against God by making it totally incapable of finding nourishment in God's Word, which also points to the fact that God's word is the reality which permanently sustains the very existence of creation. Following his inability to relate himself to God's word, Lucifer also lost his light, which in Böhme is an indication of the total breach between creation and God.[113]

Lucifer's intention to detach himself from the Godhead through the revolt that he himself ignited both within himself and within creation and which led to the breach between his being and the being of God is confirmed by Böhme's presentation of what happened to Lucifer following his rioting actions.[114] The immediate consequence of Lucifer's losing his light based on his incapacity to feed himself from God's word is his turning into a disgusting being. His actions against God transformed his being into sheer disgust, so that the realm of God's being was no longer able or willing to accept him.[115] Lucifer, therefore, was spat out from the Godhead, so his position in relationship to the Godhead also changed dramatically. To be more precise, Böhme indicates that Lucifer was thrown down from his princely throne,[116] but his actions did not affect only him; his angelic hosts were also cast away from God's realm.[117] In other words, revolt against God cannot be tolerated and all actions directed against him are promptly sanctioned in a way which places the discontent in a realm which is no longer under the direct influence of God's being. This new situation in which Lucifer found himself immediately after his revolt is pictured by Böhme in terms which suggest the idea of loss.

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[109] Georg Feuerstein, *Lucid Walking. Mindfulness and the Spiritual Potential of Humanity* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1997), 76.

[110] See also Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism*, 108; Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, and Jaroszyński, *Science in Culture*, 172.

[111] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:70, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 573–574.

[112] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 31–32.

[113] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:69, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 573–574.

[114] A constant issue in Böhme's thoght is to present Lucifer's rebellion in the close connection with God's being. See Joscelyn Godwin, *The Golden Thread. The Ageless Wisdom of the Western Mystery Traditions* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books/Theosophical Publishing House, 2007), 115.

Here is what happened to Lucifer according to Böhme. First, God's heart left him as an indication that his relationship to God has ceased to exist in its original terms of mutual love, joy, and communion.[118] Second, what Böhme calls "the other *principium*" was obscured to Lucifer and—although it is not very clear what Böhme means by "the other principle", it may nevertheless be a reference to the Godhead and its divine nature.[119] This interpretation of "the other principle" can be accepted since Lucifer's third loss was—as Böhme points out—God himself and the kingdom of heaven.[120] The idea of losing God is profoundly associated with God's entire dominion, so Lucifer experienced not only a dramatic detachment from God's being, but also the expulsion from God's sphere of unmediated influence. This is why Lucifer not only lost God's kingdom and its most fundamental features which also characterize God's being; he also lost the chance to enjoy them because his own being lost these characteristics. Thus, Lucifer's being was deprived of heavenly reason, delight, and joy; in a word, he lost all connections with God's heavenly realm, in and for which he was created to exist.[121] Whatever trace of divinity vanished from his being, so he was no longer associated with the Godhead.[122] The fourth aspect which describes Lucifer's loss as a result of his actions against God has to do with his new "location"; having been expelled from God's kingdom, he was not forced to dwell in the "dark valley".[123]

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[115] The idea of disgust applied to Lucifer is also present in Milton. See John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, new edition, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), xxi.

[116] Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 153.

[117] See Dourley, *Paul Tillich, Carl Jung, and the Recovery of Religion*, 66–67.

[118] Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 140.

[119] Lucifer lost his positive nature since what he was left with following his fall was negativity of his demonic being. See Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, 228.

[120] Compare See Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 172.

[121] Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 2, 156.

[122] Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

This phrase is quite peculiar since it appears to be a place which was also part of God's creation. Its most prominent feature is anxiety[124]—so the idea of spiritual torment is present within it—but even more interesting that this seems to be the fact that this new realm of Lucifer's dwelling is eternal.[125] Again, we do not know whether his place was created by God, although it seems so since everything is the result of God's creation, but—even more important—we do not know whether the anxiety and torment which characterize the place were also attached to this place by God's creative act or were attributed to it following Lucifer's revolt against God. In other words, it is unclear whether the source of anxiety and torment in this case is God or Lucifer.[126] What is clear, however, has to do with the fact that Lucifer's result was met with anxiety and torment, so the realm in which he lives as a result of his actions against God is now a place of anxiety and torment.

All these things happened as a result of Lucifer's revolt against God, which Böhme presents as ascension, an upward movement towards God. Lucifer rose against God, he tried to ascend to God's throne as it were; it is as if he climbed on a ladder to reach God's position.[127] His "ascending" actions though had the opposite effect, so Lucifer was cast off and thrown down in the valley of anxiety and torment. Despite his new downward position, Lucifer's attitude continued to be characterized by the desire to "go up", so the idea of ascension or elevation cannot be detached from his being.[128]

The first aspect which presents the idea of ascension in Böhme is the rise of imagination.[129] Lucifer is said to have elevated his imagination against God in connection with another action which is described in terms of the use of fire.[130] It is significant to notice here that the use of imagination can have bad connotations, especially when it happens to affect one's relationship with God, so there is in Böhme a deficient use of imagination which set creation against its creator.[131] At the same time, Lucifer seems to have ignited himself against God from the source of fire or—as Böhme names it—the very "root of fire".[132] A comparison follows which appears to present Lucifer's reaction against God, but this is done in terms which suggest some sort of naturalness, as if Lucifer's action had been legitimate to some degree. It must be said that his actions against God are not presented in fully acceptable terms; there is though a small hint at some degree of legitimacy concerning Lucifer's reaction against God.

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[123] See Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 126.

[124] Barrett, "Jacob Böhme: The Ambiguous Legacy of Speculative Passion", 43–63, in Stewart (eds.), *Kierkegaard and the Renaissance and Modern Traditions*, Tome 2: Theology, 49.

[125] See also Weeks, *Boehme*, 82.

[126] If Hegel is to be believed in this respect, torment is a reality which defines the being in general, so torment can be a feature of the spirit which speaks of both God and Lucifer (and man for that matter). See Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit. Jacob Boehme's Influence on Hegel", 15–35, in Perkins (eds.), *History and System*, 20.

[127] Böhme's idea of Lucifer's rising up against God is also present in Hegel. See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 143.

[128] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:70–71 (although Baur does not indicate this with precision), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 574.

[129] For more details about Lucifer's imagination in Böhme, read O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 133.

Thus, he did connect himself to the root of fire, but this happened because the root of fire searched for the water, and it seems that Baur uses the juxtaposition of fire and water in an attempt to identify a dualistic pattern in Böhme.[133] Fire and water are clearly regarded as opposing realities; there is, however, a strong connection between them as they have always been considered together. The dualism is evident and it serves the purpose of placing together other two realities, such as "the right mother" and "eternal nature".[134] In other words, the root of fire searches for water the very same way the right mother looks for eternal nature; Böhme is quite cryptical here but it seems that the right mother refers to Lucifer's nature, while eternal nature points to God's being. If so, the fundamental difference between the world's created status is contrasted—in dualistic terms—with God's uncreated nature. This may be the case as Böhme then explains that the root of fire—associated with the idea of the right mother—entertains a state of strong acerbity, which is characteristic of Lucifer, while the right mother finds herself in "anxious death".[135]

At this point, Böhme's thought becomes foggy as it is difficult to read into his words. The degree of difficulty presented by his thoughts is significant, so one can only attempt to decipher phrases like "the bitter sting" which acts upon the mother by turning her into a "ferocious and raging serpent". Again, if the right mother refers to Lucifer's created nature, then Böhme's presentation makes sense as Lucifer himself turned against God and the idea of the serpent representing Lucifer is indeed Judeo-Christian. Thus, Böhme seems to build an image of Lucifer which is fundamentally characterized by fear, anxiety, revolt, and death, while his actions appear to have had serious repercussions throughout the whole of creation, even within the "indissoluble" hosts of angels.[136] This is why Böhme writes about the fact that Lucifer's actions were followed by a strong antagonism which was literally caused within the angelic world. Lucifer wanted to grasp the very heart of God, and it was to this purpose that his actions were initially triggered; what happened though was that an eternal enmity developed between creation and God, so there was an opposing will which developed within creation and which also affected its relationship with God.[137]

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[130] Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, 62.

[131] See also Feuerstein, *Lucid Waking*, 76.

[132] More about fire in Böhme can be found in Hazel Rosotti, *Fire. Servant, Scourge, and Enigma* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 258.

[133] The dichotomy of water and fire is also found in Friedrich Schlegel. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 177.

[134] See Sklar, *Blake*'s Jerusalem *as Visionary Theatre*, 152.

[135] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:72, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 574. For details about Lucifer's connection with death in Böhme, see Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism*, 108.

The idea of revolt is evident in Böhme's presentation of Lucifer's actions, so beside the opposing will and eternal enmity, one also notices the eternal despair which affects all good things, a new rationality which is closely connected with the will which fuels itself from the power of fire and a corruption of the heart of God itself. Evidently, Böhme does not mean that the heart of God can be affected by corruption; he only seems to imply that the heart of God, which is reflected in Lucifer's being as a creature based on the very heart of God, is affected by depravity and corruption. Thus, as Böhme explains, the corrupted heart of God in Lucifer attempted to grasp the uncreated heart of God in the Godhead and it failed because the latter can never be obtained by revolt against God:[138]

> And when he raised up his imagination, then he kindled to himself the source or root of the fire, and then when the root of the fire sought for the water (the true mother of the eternal nature), it found the stern [or tart astringent] harshness, and the mother in the aching death, and the bitter sting [or prickle] formed the birth to be a fierce raging serpent, very terrible in itself, rising up in the indissoluble band, an eternal enmity, a will striving against itself, an eternal despair of all good, [the bitter sting also formed] the mind to be a breaking striking wheel, having its will

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[136] Compare Ariel Hessayon, *"Gold Tried in the Fire". The Prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 287.

[137] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 96.

[138] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:72 (although Baur does not indicate this with precision), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 574.

> continually aspiring to the strength of the fire, and to destroy the heart of God, and yet could never at all be able to reach it.[139]

Böhme continues to describe Lucifer's revolt against God by confining him to a reality which keeps him locked up forever.[140] There is a sense of temporality which has no ending, and this is the *locus* of Lucifer's existence following his riot against the Godhead. Thus, according to Böhme, Lucifer is forever closed in the first *principium* "as in death eternal", so the first principle—which is normally associated with God's everlasting substance and being, and especially with his severity—maintains the idea of permanence and eternity although not connected with the life which springs from God but rather with the death that seems to be the result of one's detachment from him.[141] In his new position of rage against his creation, Lucifer is no longer able to have access to God's heart and neither can he extend his dominion over it. Böhme writes that he cannot master God's heart, although his sting will forever rise in the source of fire.[142] This can be an indication of Lucifer's power which, although extremely strong, has no chance to overcome God's authority. Böhme seems to notice another dualism here—which cannot escape Baur's attention—namely the one between his incapacity to rule over God's heart on the one hand and his constant desire to seize God's place on the other. Lucifer's sting—which can be a reference to the sting of death in the Bible—gives him the chance constantly to nurture the hope that he will one day be able to grab God's heart.[143]

Böhme explains that Lucifer's hope is not only to extend his dominion over God's kingdom, but also to have everything although he eventually gets nothing. The very source of Lucifer's energy seems to be the water source, for which Böhme uses the image of the mother and is described as anxiety and acidity. Thus, Lucifer's own attitude is quite "sulphuric" in nature towards God, but it is also characterized by anxiety, which is the case for his entire angelic host. By extension, anxiety and acidity appear to be features of the entire creation which is affected by Lucifer's "sulphuric" revolt against God.[144]

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[139] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 32.

[140] Weeks, *Boehme*, 80–81.

[141] Compare O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 167.

[142] Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 125.

[143] See also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 304.

[144] For details about the relationship between anxiety and sulphur in esoteric theology, see William Reginald Ward, *Early Evangelicalism. A Global Intellectual History, 1670–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22.

Böhme identifies another dualism at this point, which is also noticed by Baur and has to do with the antagonism between water and fire. The water source constantly feeds Lucifer, who is attracted by the eternal fire, which is also his delight, as pointed out by Böhme.[145] Water and fire as permanent drives in Lucifer's existence appear as means to describe not only Lucifer himself, but also the main features of creation. Water and fire is not the only dualistic pair which defines Lucifer's features according to Böhme; he also describes another three juxtapositions which speak of his attitude of revolt against God. Thus, Lucifer's delight is "eternal freezing" in the "severe mother", "eternal hunger" in bitterness, and "eternal thirst" in the fire source. Although difficult to explain word by word, these three phrases present us with the main features of creation in its relationship with God: freezing, hunger, and thirst—all eternal—which seem to be fueled by severity, bitterness, and fierceness.[146] Lucifer appears to have tried them all in his attempt to overthrow God, so—as a created being—he was severe, bitter, and fierce in his attempts to revolt himself against God, and they all resulted in him being frozen, hungry, and thirsty following his attempts to extend his influence over everything which exists. He was utterly unsuccessful, and this is why Böhme points out that his ascension was also his fall:[147]

> (…) his [Lucifer's] refreshing is the eternal fire, and eternal freezing in the harsh mother, an eternal hunger in the bitterness, an eternal thirst in the source of the fire, his climbing up is his fall, the more he climbs up in his will, the greater is his fall, like one that standing upon a high cliff, would cast himself down into a bottomless pit, he looks still further, and he falls in further and further, and yet can find no ground.[148]

Baur comments that all these actions indicated that Lucifer's being has a temporal side attached to it; in fact, by virtue of being created, Lucifer is indeed confined by temporality. The dualism of eternity and temporality is another feature of Lucifer's existence because his eternity can and should be understood in temporal terms. In other words, Lucifer—and, by extension, God's entire creation—seems to enjoy a permanent existence, namely an existence which has no ending, but this existence can be measured by time.[149] Baur seems to be convinced that, in Böhme, temporality is somehow related to morality because it is Lucifer's temporality which displays the morality of his evil or his sin. This is because his individual will turns away from what was supposed to be the unity with God's universal will. In other words, Lucifer's will was intended to be one with God's will; nevertheless, because of Lucifer's revolt, his will became individual and severed itself from God's universal will. In doing so, Lucifer proved to be utterly self oriented and essentially selfish.[150]

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[145] Compare Nooijen, *"Unserm grossen Bekker ein Denkmal"?*, 237, n. 242.

[146] In Böhme, it seems that Lucifer's fall did not cancel the eternity of nature; it only affected its quality. Nature is fallen, but it remains nonetheless eternal. See also Hanegraaff, "Reflections on New Age and the Secularization of Nature", 22–32, in Pearson, Roberts, and Samuel (eds.), *Nature Religion Today*, 28–29.

[147] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:73, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 574.

[148] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 32.

Lucifer and Sin

In Böhme, Lucifer is attached to the idea of sin on the one hand, and sin can be explained through his actions on the other.[151] Given this connection between Lucifer—and, by extension, God's entire creation—and the reality of sin, Baur explains that there are two sides, or aspects, of sin in Böhme: ethical and physical. A clear distinction must exist between the two, although they are both part of the same reality. The morality and physicality of sin as constituent of the same and singular unity describe a fundamental feature of creation in relationship to God. Baur is convinced that Böhme's doctrine of sin is based on the essential connection between morality and physicality with respect to the reality of sin, which is a concept with a dual content. Moral or ethical sin and physical sin cannot be separated in reality although the two aspects thereof must be distinguished. It is clear that Baur notices here Böhme's dualism of sin, so the ethical and physical aspects of Böhme's hamartiology serve for the inclusion of his doctrine within Baur's idea of Gnosticism. According to Baur, however, the dualism of sin is related to the dualism of God's principles, and the connection between sin and God in this respect is crucial. Thus, Baur points out that, in Böhme, physical and ethical sin are attached to God's first principle—which is severity, although Baur does not highlight again this particular aspect of Böhme's thought—so sin is some sort of insistence on God's first principle.[152]

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[149] More about the materiality and temporality of the fallen world in Christian esotericism, in Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult*, 22.

[150] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 574–575.

[151] Bach, *Voices of the Turtledoves*, 38.

[152] See also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 24.

At the same time, physical and ethical sin must be clearly distinguished and separated from God's second principle, which encapsulates features such as love and gentleness.[153] As in Böhme, good and evil are constitutive of God's being because God can and should be understood based on our perception of nature, Baur is able to connect the reality of sin with God's being, although one must be aware that the two principles dwelling in God's very being are utterly and fundamentally different. Again, this is not an indication that God is the author of sin; it is only a means for Böhme to connect the reality of creation with the originating reality of God. The relationship between God and creation through the reality of sin is not meant to establish a direct causality between God and creation regarding sin. What Baur seems to see in Böhme's dualistic doctrine of sin though is only a sign of creation's origin in God.[154] At the same time, God's duality of principles is an indication that nature or creation is constituted the very same way, namely that good and evil are present in creation as a unifying reality.[155]

On the other hand, however, the dualism of sin—namely the distinction between ethical and physical sin—is a laceration of natural reality[156] since it appears that ethical sin is associated with thinking—or imagination in Böhme—while physical sin has to do more with the resulting action. Baur is convinced that the first principle must be clarified through the second; in other words, severity must be clarified or explained through love. When applied to God, the whole idea works because God's severity is caused by God's love; in Lucifer, however, things cannot be explained that easily or at least not based on the same rule. This is why Lucifer is closed forever in the first principle, or in acerbity, namely because his thinking was followed by action. He did not stop after he committed the ethical sin; in his case, physical sin followed and the result was his incarceration in the first principle, as in "eternal death".[157] Lucifer quenched his light, so his actions were characterized by terror, anxiety, enmity, and a sulphuric spirit. Consequently, he was relocated at the gates of hell or the abyss, and it is there that his soul was also to be found. Reverting to Böhme,

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[153] Compare Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

[154] See Victor Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment. Interpretations of Locke* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 172–173.

[155] See also Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism*, 487.

[156] Böhme's idea of the laceration of reality (or the laceration of life) as the result of sin produced echoes into the 20th century, especially in the thought of the Russian philosopher S.L. Frank (1877–1950). See, for details, V.V. Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, Volume 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), 867.

[157] See Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 172.

Baur shows that Lucifer's soul also extinguished the light of God's heart, and this is why it must also be distinguished from the other principle, which seems to be the good that can be found in God but also in creation:[158]

> Yet in this principle there is nothing else but the most horrible begetting, the greatest anguish and hostile quickening, like a brimstone-spirit, and is ever the gate of hell, and the abyss wherein prince Lucifer (at the extinguishing of his light) continued, and wherein (in the same abyss of hell) the soul continues, which is separated from the second principle, and whose light (which shines) from the heart of God is extinguished (…).[159]

The concept of sin is of paramount importance for Böhme, and Baur is deeply aware of it. Baur's reasons for discussing Böhme's doctrine of sin have to do again with the dualism which he sees in Böhme's idea of sin. For instance, sin must be considered from a double standpoint: on the one hand, sin cannot be conceived as a principle which is separated from the being of God, so sin cannot be detached from God,[160] and on the other hand, sin does not work "from God himself", so one cannot say that God is the author of sin.[161] It is crucial to understand this duality of sin in Böhme because, for Baur, this is an essential aspect which allows him to include Böhme's theology in the general evolution of Gnosticism throughout church history.[162] Consequently, in Baur's understanding of Böhme, sin is to be found in God's being as a reality which exists within another reality, but this does not mean that God is the author of sin. The very concept of sin, Baur notices, is fully realized when one understands that the most fundamental and highest meaning of the idea of sin has to do with the fact that it turns away from God.[163]

In other words, sin exists somewhat latently in God's being, but when it becomes active, it then turns away from God. As in Baur the image of God is nothing but an idealized version of the human being, it means that the reality of the Godhead mirrors the reality of the human being, so it is the human being which is characterized by the dualism of sin which Baur sees in Böhme.[164] When sin is said to exist latently in God, but God is not its author, Baur infers that ideally sin does exist within the human being, but man is not the one which activates it, at least not the idealized man which occupies Baur's thought. Mundane reality, however, is totally different, and confirms not only the fact that sin exists, in a latent way, in every human being, but also that every human being has a way to ignite the latent state of sin by making it active.[165]

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[158] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:47, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 575. Baur also points to Böhme's *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:20, a text which speaks of the devil's pride and arrogance.

[159] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 28.

[160] For a contrary view, see G.C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, trans. Philip C. Holtrop (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971, reprinted 1980), 28–29.

[161] Sin is the attempt to put a distance between God and oneself, an idea which is also present in Schelling. See Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of Philosophers*, 98–99.

[162] For details, see O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 157.

[163] See also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 24.

Going back to Baur's understanding of Böhme's doctrine of sin, the image of the sin's latent existence within God is compared with the reality of winter. Baur points out that, in Böhme, God is not the creator of sin, but the Godhead in its entirety contains a reality which, although not called "sin", still reflects the harshness of sin. For instance, Baur shows that, according to Böhme, the whole of the Godhead has within itself, within its innermost nucleus, a terrible acerbity. This is in fact the quality of severity which contracts within itself other realities, such as asperity, toughness, darkness, and coldness, very much like winter which has them all and is defined by them both individually and integrally.[166] Winter is not bad in itself; it is only a reality of nature and it is in this particular way that sin should be understood. Sin does not appear to be bad, so it does not have any morality attached to it since it is part of God's inner being. Like winter, which is a state of nature, sin is a state of the Godhead in the sense that, while it can be said to be inactive within it is still described by aspects which convey the idea of asperity. As Böhme writes referring to the acerbity of the Godhead while indirectly pointing to the characteristics of sin since the general context focuses on Lucifer, winter can be gruesomely cold and it may even turn water into ice;[167] in a word, it can be so tough that, for some people, it can become unbearable:[168]

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[164] Compare Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 91–92.

[165] For a social approach of Böhme's understanding of sin, whose goal was reportedly to equalize the gap between the rich and the poor by showing that sin and salvation from sin are universal, see Arouna P. Ouédraogo, "The Social Genesis of Western Vegetarianism to 1859", 154–167, in Robert Dare (eds.), *Food, Power, and Community. Essays in the History of Food and Drink* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1999), 156.

[166] Böhme's connection between sin and winter is also present in Blake. See W.H. Stevenson (eds.), *Blake. The Complete Poems*, third edition (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007, first published 1971), 276.

[167] See Herman Vetterling, *The Illuminate of Görlitz or Jakob Böhme's Life and Philosophy*, Volume 1 (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2003, first published 1923), 255.

[168] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:55, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 575. Compare Weeks, *Boehme*, 86–87.

> The whole deity has in its innermost or beginning birth, in the pit or kernel, a very tart, terrible sharpness, in which the astringent quality is a very horrible, tart, hard, dark, and cold attraction or drawing together, like winter, when there is a fierce, bitter, cold frost, when water is frozen into ice and besides is very intolerable.[169]

Still, winter is not a bad reality; from a moral point of view, winter is not bad; it is only a very harsh reality of nature. Likewise, before being activated, sin may well include the idea of severity, but it cannot be said to be morally biased towards evil. Nevertheless, when sin becomes active, then it works towards turning away from God, and this is the moment when its morality leads towards evil. It must be stressed however, that Böhme does not speak of sin as being part of God's being; he only mentions the quality of severity as a feature of the Godhead, which not only exists in the very essence of God, but can also be said to stand outside the other characteristics of God.[170] Severity exists in God and is distinct from the rest of his attributes. It is this severity though which can be said to produce sin, but only if the image of God is understood as the idealized version of humanity.[171] Sin cannot be authored by God, but it is the result of man's actions. When God becomes an idealized human being, then one can see how his natural acerbity, which is present within its most essential being, can turn into sin. Böhme's discourse, however, focuses on the image of God and his acerbity, which he attempts to prove based on biblical sources.[172]

Böhme is interested in having the relationship between God and sin clarified, so what he does next is to establish a connection between God's being and his quality of wrath. It has already been mentioned that Böhme does not place the reality of sin in God's being; one can infer that sin is somehow connected with God's being but not in its active form. Wrath, however, and acerbity are qualities which can be found in God's being and, when they are present in the human being and become active, they turn into sin, which is both moral and physical. Regarding God's wrath though, Böhme writes that God is a wrathful and zealous being, and it this particular characteristic which accounts for what Böhme calls "the deepest and innermost concealed birth of God".[173] The image of birth as applied to God here seems to have nothing in common with the idea that God has an origin other than himself as if God had been caused by an external reality. What seems to be the case here has to do with Böhme's conviction that the idea of birth accounts for God's characteristics, in the sense that God is a being and, like any other being, he has a certain set of features.[174] One of the most salient of these features is wrath—described as intense heat—which is displayed on Mount Sinai, as seen in the biblical texts of Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9, both indicated by Böhme as sources for his argument:[175]

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[169] Behmen, "Aurora", 124.

[170] See also Hunt, *An Essay on Pantheism*, 182.

[171] Compare Jaffé, *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of C.G. Jung*, 100.

[172] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 575–576.

[173] See Edward A. Beach, *The Potencies of God(s)*, 74.

> And the heat would be against both, in that with its fierce, wrathful kindling and rising up makes all hot, burning, and raging, and is fully or totally against the cold (…). And thus, this is the very deepest and innermost hidden birth of God, according to which he calls himself an angry, zealous or jealous God, as may be seen by the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.[176]

Thus, God's wrath defines the essence of his being, but it appears to be morally good.[177] God's wrath is not sinful—at least, this is what Böhme seems to be saying—it is even morally good; on the other hand, however, God's wrath can be seen in his creatures and, once detected in creatures, it appears to turn into sin.[178] This is why Böhme explains that it is in this particular quality—namely God's wrath—that the eternal and infernal corruption lies. Lucifer, as God's creature, became the devil because God's wrath, which was in him by creation, transformed itself into sin once he activated it against God, his creator.[179] The idea of evil and sin becomes clearer when an answer to the question whether God knew or wanted evil or sin to exist in creation is eventually found. The whole concept of evil and sin is dependent on God's initial intention with creation, so the issue of the origin of sin as related to God's being can shed light on the whole problem, and especially on man's decision to lean towards evil rather than good.[180]

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[174] This indicates that the birth of God refers to God's being and to its self-begetting. See Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Problem of Being and Existence (from *The Beginning and the End*)", 358–360, in Nino Langiulli (eds.), *European Existentialism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 373.

[175] Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:61, 63 (Baur mistakenly indicates 15:63 as the quoted text), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 575.

[176] Behmen, "Aurora", 125.

[177] Also check Schmidt-Biggemann, *Philosophia Perennis*, 118.

[178] Compare Kirschner, *The Religion and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 185.

[179] See Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:54–63, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 576.

[180] Glausser, *Locke and Blake*, 31.

The reality of God's being, however, is the one which can put an end to the discussion about the origin of evil, and Böhme is aware of this aspect since he insists once again on defining God from two perspectives or, to come closer to Baur's intention to include him amongst the promotors of Gnosticism, in dualistic terms. Thus, Böhme admits that God is wrathful, but wrath is not the only feature which defines God's being. In addition to being wrathful, God is also a loving reality, so love works together with wrath in offering a complete picture of God.[181] Consequently, if we are to believe Böhme, God seems to have been aware of the possibility of evil and sin according to his wrath, but not according to his love, because God can be called God based on his love. This is in an indication that love seems to be more important than wrath in the order of God's characteristics because, in Böhme, love should be totally detached from the reality of what he calls "the infernal creature", whose main characteristics are wrath or fierceness and imagination—which is in fact what pushed Lucifer towards his revolt against God.[182] This is why God neither knew, nor willed evil or sin according to Scripture, which for Böhme means that God's love cannot be associated in any way whatsoever with the idea of sin and evil, since his love is synonymous to eternal good.[183]

In other words, good and love exist in God as eternal realities which define his being, which is an indication that no trace of evil or sin can be detected there in spite of God's wrath which seems to be aware of the possibility thereof, without its actual enactment. God may have been aware that evil or sin can exist in the world, but he was not its creator and neither was he the one who triggered it into moral and physical action within the reality of his creation. Böhme clarifies that Lucifer was created by God to be good, but it was Lucifer who decided to turn away from God in disobedience which caused God to replace him with another king, Jesus Christ; in fact, Böhme writes that Christ was created by God from Lucifer's deity which must have persuaded Baur to include Böhme among the Gnostics:[184]

> God created and made him [Lucifer] a king of light, and when he became disobedient, and would be above the whole or total God, then God spewed him out of his seat, and in the midst or center of our time created another king out of the same deity, out of which lord Lucifer was created [understand it aright, out of the *Salitter*, which was without distinct from

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[181] See also Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 194.

[182] Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 175–176.

[183] O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 32.

[184] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:36, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 576.

> the body of king Lucifer], and set him on the royal throne of Lucifer, and gave him might, authority, and power, as Lucifer before his Fall. And the same king is called Jesus Christ, and is the son of God and of man.[185]

As far as Böhme is concerned, evil cannot be detected in God's being, at least not in its activated state. One can claim that evil may be connected to God's being through the attribute of wrath, which is essential to God's constitution, but God's wrath is devoid of any manifestation of evil. Should evil be manifest within God's being, then love would not be characterized by gentleness and humility. It is evident that Böhme has in mind God's love, which—given God's state of perfection—can exist together with his sinless wrath.[186] Böhme is concerned to keep together God's wrath and his love, so he does insist that God is both a wrathful, zealous God, and a consuming fire. Needless to say that the idea of fire is associated with the reality of God's omnipotence and the possibility of destruction which that entails, but God's zeal, as well as his wrath, are characterized by love.[187] Böhme seems convinced that God did not intend to create or, to be more precise, activate the possibility of evil, so he appears not to have known from eternity how sin would eventually develop. This affirmation could somehow limit God's omniscience, but Böhme is not concerned with this particular aspect. What he wants to do now is keep sin and evil away from God's being while still insisting on God's wrath and love which both reflect themselves in his creation. However, had God known that evil would activate itself the way it did, he would not have been called God, but only a consuming fire.[188]

This is the confirmation that, for Böhme, the idea of God includes the reality of love beside omnipotence, wrath, jealousy, and zeal. God is indeed a consuming fire, but its most fundamental essence lies within his love, which he manifested towards his creatures. It is equally important for Böhme to make sure that the very essence of God's being is not devoid of the other constitutive quality of his personhood, which is wrath. He underlines that the basis of divinity is deeply rooted in the reality of wrath, coupled with love, and this understanding should clarify the doctrine of evil.[189] Thus, evil is connected with the fact that God is a wrathful being, but this is not a direct causality. Evil was not caused by God, but by creation. At this point, Böhme resumes his presentation of Lucifer, who triggered God's wrath by igniting what Böhme calls "God's saltpeter". Lucifer's action seems to have been augmented by his rioting intentions against God, because—as Böhme points out—he did not only ignite God's saltpeter, or his wrath, but he also did it with violence.[190]

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[185] Behmen, "Aurora", 137.

[186] Compare Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism*, 108.

[187] The relationship between love and wrath in God's being is crucial for Böhme since they are essential aspects of the human being. See Versluis, *Restoring Paradise*, 71.

[188] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:36. See also Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 11:22, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 576.

Consequently, Böhme confirms that God's being has always been characterized by wrath, so it is from eternity that his being contains the reality of wrath in a state of inactivity. It is as if God's wrath were dormant, because Böhme writes that it rested and stood in God's gentleness from eternity. To make this even clearer, he insists that God's wrath was in a state of rest "in hiding", as if it had been hidden within God's being never to be revealed against his creatures.[191] Nevertheless, once God's wrath was triggered against Lucifer and his hosts, it has become evident that God can now be rightfully called a wrathful and vengeful God, especially against those who hate him.[192] It seems though that Lucifer's actions did not surprise God because God's wrath is nothing but his righteousness.[193]

In other words, God had the right to take action against Lucifer and, in so doing, Lucifer himself became the instrument of God's righteousness, which is an indication that Lucifer's rioting actions were permitted by God as well as turned into means which convey God's righteousness. Thus, God's wrath and especially his righteousness were present, or they could be seen, in Lucifer's destroying power.[194] To be sure, Lucifer's actions were not desired by God, but once he acted against his creator, God's omnipotent being was able to turn Lucifer's revolt into a manifestation of his righteousness.[195]

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[189] For details about love and wrath in Böhme, but also about their relationship with evil, see Cavendish, *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic, and Folk Belief*, 258.

[190] Gregory, "Jacob Boehme", 214–215, in Kurian and Smith III (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Christian Literature*, Volume 1, 215.

[191] More about God's wrath as a hidden reality, see Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 2, 39.

[192] Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:14, 16:39, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 576.

[193] If God's being is an image of the human being, then it seems that Böhme's righteousness is internal and inborn, rather than external and imputed, as in mainline Lutheran theology. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 94.

[194] See also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23–24.

[195] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 576–577.

Lucifer and Death

Böhme's discourse about Lucifer becomes tougher as he connects God's fallen archangel with nature's reality of death. Lucifer is part of creation and this is why his actions affected creation in its entirety:[196]

> There was no remedy, neither in heaven, nor in this world, they were captivated in hard slavery, in misery, and death; the abyss of hell held the soul, and the spirit of this world held the body [captive] Death and corruption was in the body, and there was nothing else in them but enmity to itself, [proceeding] from the tart essences of the stars, wherein one source [or quality] strives against the other, and one breaks [or destroys] the other with greater pain and torment to the body, with trembling and shrieking, and at last [comes] corruption and death, as it is before our eyes.[197]

Clearly the idea as well as the reality of death seem to be the immediate consequence of Lucifer's rioting actions against God, but—despite the grim contemplation of death and what happens when death strikes—Böhme insists on having God in control while Lucifer, now the devil, has no power over God's decision and actions.[198] Lucifer cannot exert his influence over God's dominion and his actions can do nothing to God's nature; they can, however, ignite God's wrath. Böhme seems to appreciate the idea of God's wrath as morally good, but Lucifer's actions somehow cast a shadow of doubt over God's wrath. Since he transformed creation's perception of God's wrath as morally good into something which no longer enjoys the attribute of goodness, Lucifer is the servant of the executioner, most likely a reference to death.[199]

If so, death seems to be above Lucifer himself, so one can say that Lucifer has been under the influence of death following his revolt against God. Böhme also mentions that Lucifer applies the law—probably a reference to the law of nature—as a servant, not as a judge. This is again an indication that Lucifer is not in control of how things work in nature; God is the one which controls everything and everybody, including Lucifer, who is the instrument of his decisions. Nevertheless, God seems to grant Lucifer the right to make use of the natural law in a way which serves God's purposes. This is why, in Böhme, Lucifer works with the law as a servant and not as a judge, which is God's sole prerogative.[200]

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[196] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 17:63.

[197] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 156.

[198] In Böhme, God's wrath works together with Lucifer, and the result of such a cooperation is—as far as human beings are concerned—suffering and death, as Oetinger notices. See Sigrid Großmann, *Friedrich Christoph Oetingers Gottesvorstellung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1979), 266.

[199] The connection between death and Lucifer is also evident in Huijs, *Gnosis*, 216. It should be said here that, despite the evident connection between Lucifer and death, the original creation presented Lucifer within the realm of life.

Lucifer therefore is not the judge—God is—but he can be the executioner who is subject to the judge.[201] Lucifer appears to be the one who imparts death throughout the reality of nature, but only under God's full control. Thus, he is the executioner who does whatever the judge tells him to do. God is not only the judge, he is the king of the land; in other words, he is the one who controls the entire natural realm.[202] On the other hand, Lucifer keeps himself busy with spreading death throughout nature to all those who fell away from God. The idea of falling away from God is crucial for Böhme because death seems to touch only those who experienced it. At the same time though it is clear that all beings who live in nature went through the experience of falling away from God, so they must all receive the reality of death as imparted by Lucifer in his capacity of God's instrument in his capacity of executioner.[203] How does death strike those who fell away from God?

Böhme has some examples; for instance, some die by sword, others by rope, and yet others by water. One thing, however, is quite clear, namely the fact that those who fall away from God seem to do this in a state of full awareness, so they rebel against God as Lucifer himself did. In other words, following in the footsteps of Lucifer and taking action against God will inevitably lead to one's falling away from God, which ends up in death. As far as Böhme is concerned, revolt against God is not only death—it is in fact suicide—so all those who fall away from God as consequence of their revolt against God do nothing but kill themselves.[204] Lucifer imparts death to all of them, and it is in this capacity that he acts as an executioner, according to Böhme's description:[205]

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[200] It is interesting what Berdyaev made of Böhme's view of God's being in control over Lucifer. In Berdyaev, God cannot control the uncreated freedom which precedes God himself, so God is a being whose main characteristics are goodness and weakness. See Anna L. Crone, *Eros and Creativity in Russian Religious Renewal. The Philosophers and the Freudians* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 186.

[201] The notion of God as Judge is also present in Paracelsus, although his God seems to look more like the classical Gnostic demiurge. See Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 2, 15.

[202] A particular phrase, "the council of stars" (*Rat der Sterne*), looks like a very important piece of evidence at this point. The council of stars seems to equal God's position as if the stars represented somehow God's dominion. If so, Böhme attempts to place nature at the same level with God and vice versa, which is an indication that there is a powerful link between God's realm and the world. At the same time, Böhme appears to present God in natural terms and nature in divine terms, as if they existed together in an unending symbiosis. Should this be the case, then Baur must have perceived Böhme's relationship between the world and God as a fundamental cosmological and existential dualism which helps him again place Böhme within the history of Gnosticism. See Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 17:68, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 577.

[203] Weeks, *Boehme*, 16.

> (...) He is the hangman [or executioner] and executes the right as a servant [minister or officer] but not as judge, but as an executioner. He is executioner in the kingdom of the world, the stars are the councils, and God is the king of the land, and whosoever departs from God, falls into the council of the stars, which run many upon the sword, and make them lay violent hands upon themselves, and [bring] some to a rope, others to the water, and there he is very busy, and is the driver or executioner.[206]

Death seems to be not only Lucifer's action as a result of God's command; it is also the consequence of God's wrath. Thus, death seems to be like a fire which burns within God's wrath, and it becomes evident in the reality of nature. The fire of death, as it were, burns now in nature and affects all the beings which live throughout it. This is why, in Böhme, the whole nature seems to be ignited by Lucifer's actions against God, and this is a fact which does not escape Baur's careful reading of Böhme.[207] The dualism of the consequences of Lucifer's actions is clear for Baur: on the one hand, Lucifer's attempt to riot against God brought God's wrath upon himself and, on the other hand, the same action brought death upon the entire natural realm.[208]

The liaison between Lucifer and nature is crucial for Böhme. Lucifer is not only a created being so, in this sense, he is part of nature or the created realm; Lucifer is the one creature of God who managed to corrupt nature—Adam and

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[204] For an informed discussion about the consequences of Lucifer's rebellion in Böhme, see Hessayon, *"Gold Tried in the Fire"*, 287–288.

[205] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 17:68–69, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 577.

[206] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 156–157.

[207] The confrontation between Lucifer and God, evil and good, is also noticed by Ernst Bloch, who prefers to focus on the reconciliation of the two polarities. See, for details, Blocher, *Evil and the Cross*, 67.

[208] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 577.

Eve included—by setting it against God.[209] The departure point for nature's corruption or for its falling away from God is Lucifer's attempt to rise above the entire created order. Thus, Böhme explains, Lucifer's plan was to promote himself by revolt against God—in other words, he wanted to be God all by himself. In doing so, he not only wished to take over God's reigning place over God's kingdom and all his creation, but he also ignited the fire of wrath within him.[210] Once his wrath was triggered against God, Böhme writes that Lucifer's fire spirit—which had been ignited by his attitude of revolt against his creator—burned with intensity within God's nature. The immediate result was the ignition of what Böhme calls "the whole body in God's nature", an action which Lucifer managed to perform according to the extent of his power of dominion. What seems to be clear though in Böhme is the fact that, while God is all-powerful, Lucifer's influence appears to be limited although still powerful.[211] The dualism is evident, though not entirely balanced, between God's status and Lucifer's intentions to replace God.[212] It is important to notice, however, that the revolt against God took place in nature and it was nature which became ignited to revolt against God.[213]

Böhme's reference to the "body" within God's nature seems to be a reference to the material constitution of the physical world or to God's creation, so the whole revolt against God originated outside God's being as an indication that evil and sin exist and manifest themselves outside God's personal existence. The most important consequence of Lucifer's revolt against God was not to set nature against God, but to detach himself from his close relationship with divinity.[214] His light went off, Böhme points out again, and once this happened, Lucifer was no longer able to inqualify—or to interact—with God despite the essential difference between their natures: God as uncreated being and Lucifer as created being. To be more precise, Böhme points out that Lucifer's loss of light made him totally incapable of making any connection with the dual birth of God, namely the birth of the Son of God and the birth of the Spirit of God.[215]

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[209] See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303–304.

[210] An even bigger problem is, according to Böhme, that Lucifer remained in the first principle. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 24.

[211] Lucifer was not only a powerful being; he wanted to increase his power, exactly like Adam. See Weeks, *Boehme*, 119.

[212] The idea of replacement is important for Gnostic thought: first, because it refers to the a fallen deity who wanted to replace God and second, because it points to man's original destiny to replace the fallen deity. See, for details, Walter Pagel, "Paracelsus and the Neoplatonic and Gnostic Tradition" [originally published in *Ambix. The Journal of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry* 8.3 (1960): 125–166], 101–142, in Allen G. Debus (eds.), *Alchemy and Early Modern Chemistry. Papers from Ambix* (Huddersfield: Jeremy Mills Publishing, 2004), 117.

[213] See also Weeks, *Boehme*, 16.

[214] Compare Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 44.

The idea of birth here seems to be a mere indication of the Son's and the Spirit's being, so Lucifer lost not only his light but also his capacity to stay in close connection with the Son and the Spirit. He lost touch with God's Trinitarian being and, as a result, he settled for the dualism which now exists in nature and which can be described as antagonism between nature and God. Having lost his relationship with the Son and the Spirit, Lucifer still stood in a "relationship" with God the Father, but only with his attribute of severity. God's acerbity spat Lucifer out of God's nature "in the outer nature", so Lucifer seems to have severed all his ties to God's realm, which placed him in the nature of God's created world.[216] According to Böhme, Lucifer was thrown—with his fire spirit—into the nature which he himself ignited against God through his fire of wrath:[217]

> For the light of God, and the spirit of God, cannot comprehend the sharp birth or geniture, and therefore they are two distinct persons, and so lord Lucifer could no more touch, see, feel, or taste the heart of God and the Holy Spirit of God with his austere, cold, and hard fire-birth, but was spewed out with his fire-spirit into the outermost nature, wherein he had kindled the wrath-fire.[218]

This nature, in which Lucifer was cast away, is nevertheless God's body, in which the very divinity of God is being born. This indication is important because it explains why Lucifer, despite his being cast away from God, is still used by God as his instrument. So, even if Lucifer no longer enjoyed a close connection with God, he was still tied to God's creation, which is God's body, or what can be called the materiality of divinity. The "gentle birth of God"—which opens itself to light and in Böhme seems to be a reference to God's innermost being—is out of Lucifer's reach although it can be seen in God's body, or in the created material order. Lucifer is totally unable to grasp God's gentleness, so he cannot rise to the point that he replaces God's gentleness with his fierceness.[219] This is also true for all "the devils", which seems to be Böhme's reference to all fallen creatures in nature, so all those who fell away from God are unable to seize God's gentleness. What they can do in turn is cause their bodies to die down in relation to light. This can mean that while the light is God's being, the bodies of fallen creatures die down or wither since they can no longer stay in touch with God's being. Fallen creatures have their spirits being constantly born in the innermost acerbity according to the severity of God's law.[220] In other words, Lucifer and all fallen beings cannot detach themselves completely from the God they wanted to replace. Thus, while the relationship with God is lost, their existence is characterized by a constant antagonistic dualism: they wanted to rid themselves of God and, having lost in their attempt, they now have to live according to the consequences set in God's law.[221]

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[215] The birth of the Son of God and the birth of the Spirit of God are part of God's plans to restore humanity according to his will. See Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 144.

[216] Böhme appears to have borrowed the ideas about Lucifer's relationship with matter from Paracelsus. See Hanegraaff, "Human Potential before Esalen", 17–44, in Kripal and Shuck (eds.), *Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture*, 28.

[217] Böhme, *Aurora*, 23:93 (in Baur it is mistakenly listed as *Aurora*, 23:9), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 577–578. For the connection between Lucifer and material nature, see Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 153.

[218] Behmen, "Aurora", 238.

Lucifer and Evil

The next step for Böhme is to explain why the world contains the reality of evil and why evil is to be found in the world, in God's creation, not in God's being. Thus, according to Böhme, God created the world after Lucifer's fall,[222] so all the things which exist or all the realities of created order were made out of the same saltpeter, namely the substance in which Lucifer himself was to be found following his revolt against God.[223] It is as though Lucifer had infested the "saltpeter" from which the world was subsequently created. No reference is given to what his saltpeter might consist of; it is clear though that the same saltpeter or substance can be found in both Lucifer and the world. Consequently, the state of revolt, as well as the resulting evil and sin, are all existent in the devil and the world. To be sure, the devil and the world are made of the same mold, which in Böhme accounts for the reality of evil in the created order.[224]

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[219] More about God's gentleness in Böhme, in Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism", 43–89, in Norman and Welchman (eds.), *The New Schelling*, 53–54.

[220] Böhme, *Aurora*, 23:94, 96, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 577–578.

[221] For details about Lucifer and his connection with God's law, compare C.C.J. Baron Bunsen, *God in History or the Progress of Man's Faith in the Moral Order of the World*, Volume 3, trans. Susanna Winkworth (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870), 257.

[222] This indicates that Lucifer's fall happened before Adam's fall and, of course, the creation of the world. See Jaroszyński, *Science and Culture*, 172.

[223] See Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:78, but also 21:122. Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578.

The world, however, was created by God out of love, and since God is love and his love was poured towards the world, then it means that the world is still under the influence of God's love. It is indeed a love which also has God's wrath within it, but God's love is present there nevertheless. To be more precise, according to Böhme, the fire of God's wrath can still be seen in God's love for the world until the end of everything.[225] The entire movement of creation has its origin in God, even if this movement seems to have been triggered by God's wrath.[226] Thus, Böhme seems to imply that the stars rotate and move because of the inflamed sadness of God which originates in God's wrath:[227]

> Now when the animated or soulish spirit was generated in this severe and astringent fire's birth, then it pressed very furiously forth from the body into nature, or the *Salitter* of God, and destroyed the gracious, amiable and blessed love in the *Salliter*, for it pressed very fiercely, furiously, and in a fiery manner, as a raging tyrant through all, and supposed that itself alone was God, itself alone would govern with its sharpness. From hence now existed the great contrary opposite will and eternal enmity between God and Lucifer, for the power of God moves very softly, meekly, pleasantly, and friendly, so that its birth cannot be conceived of or apprehended, and the spirits of Lucifer move and tear very harshly, astringently, in a fiery manner, swiftly, and furiously. An example of which you have in the kindled *Salitter* of the stars, which because of this kindled fierceness, must roll with the vanity, even to the last judgment day, and then the fierceness will be separated from the, and be given to king Lucifer, for an eternal house.[228]

Nature, or the reality of the world, appears to be connected with the substance of stars. This is why, in Böhme, nature is tied with the stars and, as stars are the result of God's creation, the natural world also originates in God. To be sure, the world of nature is linked with the ignition of the lights of stars on the one hand, while on the other hand, the same natural reality can be traced back to God's most severe, powerful, and fierce birth.[229] Böhme seems to be obsessed with the idea of God's birth as he uses it many times; God's birth though appears to designate God's substance and, most importantly, the permanent movement of God's innermost substance. In other words, the world is connected with God's substance which relates itself to the world by means of God's wrath. In Böhme though God's wrath burns forever, like the fire of hell, which is an indication that both God's realm and the domain of Lucifer seem to influence the world with all forms of life existing throughout it.[230]

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[224] See also Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 70.

[225] Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:54–56, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578.

[226] The connection between God's wrath and creation in Böhme is mediated by Lucifer, Hegel believes, because Lucifer's spirit is the "embodiment" of God's wrath. See Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, 49.

[227] Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:53, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578.

[228] Behmen, "Aurora", 153.

As far as Baur is concerned, it is quite clear that the flourishing of God's wrath, coupled with the fire of hell, may appear like an evident dualism, which places Böhme again within the history of Gnosticism. This dualism, however, does not seem to be equally balanced, since the world appears to be under the influence of Lucifer's domain to a greater extent than under God's direct supervision. This is probably why Böhme points out that nature could have transformed itself in love, according to heavenly laws; nature though did not do such a thing, so all the devils or all fallen beings lost the chance to come close to God again. If nature had changed itself in love, the acerbity of its birth could have turned into a manifestation of God's law, which could have pushed fallen beings towards God's kingdom. As this was not the case, fallen beings were cast away from God in what Böhme calls the "horrible heat and cold" and the "poison of bitterness and sourness" of the world.[231] The heat, cold, bitterness, and sourness are all characteristics of the stars, and fallen beings are inextricably connected with these realities, which seem to keep them away from God's love, a reality constantly struggling with wrath.[232] In Böhme's words:

> Now when thou beholdest the sun and stars, thou must not think that they are the holy and pure God, and thou must not offer to pray to them, or ask any thing of them, for they are not the holy God, but are kindled,

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[229] More information about the fiery birth can be found in Vetterling, *The Illuminate of Görlitz or Jakob Böhme's Life and Philosophy*, Volume 2, 517.

[230] See van Meurs, "William Blake and His Gnostic Myths", 269–310, in van den Broek and Hanegraaff (eds.), *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, 289.

[231] This points to Böhme's realism as well as his preoccupation with nature, as Schlegel noticed. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 126.

[232] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:44–64 (Baur, however, does not use the paragraphs in this order; for instance he quotes 64 and then juxtaposes it to the second half of 63), and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578.

> austere birth or geniture of his body, wherein love and wrath wrestle with one another.[233]

Böhme uses a very plastic imagery to present creation, which is described in terms resembling the building of a house,[234] an idea which can be later found in Hegel.[235] God's creation is the house, and this house is illuminated by the stars. According to Böhme, the stars give light to the entire house or God's whole creation which—following Lucifer's fall through his rebellion against God—is ontologically connected with the reality of death. The illumination of the stars[236] seems to convey the previous ideas of heat and cold, which can be associated with destruction and death, because the whole house—or creation in its entirety—is "frozen in death", to use Böhme's own rendering.[237] Another possible translation tells that creation is "ossified in death", so death is practically the most fundamental reality of creation in its fallen state. The whole earth shares the same condition, so the world of living beings is characterized by death.

The idea of birth is used again by Böhme, with the intention of underlining the over-encompassing reality of death. The most external birth is death and ossification—in other words, the essence of the entire creation is the lack of movement and activity, a state which so poignantly defines death.[238] Böhme compares the death of creation with the bark of a tree, which is solidified and apparently devoid of any activity, so it is in contrast with the inner constitution of the tree that is full of life. What is clear though has to do with creation's state of death, which is the very essence of the *corpus*.

In fact, Böhme points out that sidereal birth—or the innermost constitution of stars—must be understood as referring to the image of the body, so the whole idea of creation is encapsulated in concepts such as body, stars, and death. Despite the all-powerful and omnipresent reality of death, stars do bear life within them, so creation is characterized not only by death, but also by life and a continuous state of birth which sustains life.[239] The inner life of creation is harsh—in the sense that severity is one of its main features—and in this respect, it shares a fundamental aspect with death, which is also severe. Thus, both life and death are fundamentally harsh and severe, so these two characteristics not only define creation, but also the origin of creation which is the creator himself. The idea of creation in Böhme seems to be represented by the juxtaposition of the sun and the stars, which both speak of the world's creator.[240]

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[233] Behmen, "Aurora", 245.

[234] The body, or the material substance, is a house for the spiritual qualities which make up God's being. See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 90.

[235] More about Hegel's view of the concept of house, see Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Hegel's House, or 'People Are States Too' ", 281–287, in *Review of International Studies* 30.2 (2004): 282.

[236] This also refers to inner spiritual illumination. See also Daniel W. Hollis III, "Cultural Origins of New Age Cults", 31–48, in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 10.1/2 (1998): 37.

[237] Compare Weeks, *Boehme*, 36.

[238] The idea of death's rigidity and immobility is also present in Schlegel. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 176.

Nevertheless, the observation of the sun and the stars do not point to the "holy and pure God", but to the "inflamed and severe birth of his body", which is Böhme's indication of the fact that the very idea of God is essentially dualistic.[241] God is not only a reality which defines itself before the existence of creation, but also the very reality which defines creation. In other words, God cannot be detached from creation or vice versa; God can only be considered in connection with creation, which is also true for creation.[242] This is why, in Böhme, love and wrath coexist in God, in the very same way that they coexist in creation and, although there is a distinction between the two—which is the idea of "heavens"—love and wrath cannot be detached in the reality of the created world. The "heavens" are not only what distinguishes love from wrath; they are also the place where wrath transforms itself into love, so in Böhme the idea of heaven is somehow downgraded to the mundane reality of creation:[243]

> And that new body is the water of life, which is generated when the light presses through the wrath, and the Holy Ghost is the former or framer therein. But heaven is the partition between love and wrath, and is the seat wherein the wrath is transmuted or changed into love.[244]

Baur notices Böhme's intention to present both God and creation in dualistic terms by juxtaposing not only life and death, but also love and wrath. This explains the reality of evil and the fact that, while evil cannot be traced back to God, it can be connected with his wrath and especially with God's ignited saltpeter. This is the origin of all creatures of the world, which—according to Böhme—are good and bad. To be sure, Böhme underlines the origin of evil and wild beasts, which exist in this world because of God's ignited saltpeter, which is God's wrath.[245] Nothing is said at this point about the dualism of man's constitution and why evil exists in humanity, but it is clear that the explanation of why the reality of evil exists in the world has to do with God's being. For Baur, evil is essentially dualistic because, although it cannot be said to have originated in God, its existence cannot be separated from God and the world.[246]

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[239] This seems to imitate God's eternal birth. See Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Volume 1, 590.

[240] Compare Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 201.

[241] See Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1648–1840* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964, reprinted 1982), 136.

[242] Creation completes God and vice versa. See Paul Shore, "Boehme, Jakob", 435–437, in Hans J. Hillerbrand (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, Volume 1: A-C (London: Routledge, 2004), 436.

[243] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:44–63, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578.

[244] Behmen, "Aurora", 244.

Lucifer and the World

Lucifer's origin is a recurrent theme in Böhme, who seems to build his entire explanation of why evil exists in the world in close connection with it. Evil began to exist in the world when Lucifer attempted to rise above God, but also when his original spirits ignited themselves in a movement which defined Lucifer's revolt against God.[247] When Lucifer's rebellion started, then the spirit of savageness entered all bodies; in other words, the material world was invaded by a reality which defines the manifestations of evil in nature. At the same time, Lucifer's angel—most likely Böhme's reference to Lucifer's angelic essence—collided with God's saltpeter, as an indication that Lucifer's actions affected the world created by God. The imagery used to describe both the action of Lucifer's revolt against God and its immediate results is again quite plastic, since Böhme presents Lucifer as a "fiery serpent or dragon", which produced a whole range of poisonous and fiery forms of savagery.[248] One's imagination should not run wild at this point; the fiery forms of savagery are, in Böhme's opinion, the wild and evil beasts which roam on the face of the earth. Although directed against God himself, Lucifer's action seems to have failed in its attempt to disrupt God's rule over his creation. Lucifer may have managed to ignite God's saltpeter and, in doing so, to trigger his wrath, but it is evident that the damage that he intended against God was rather dissipated away from God's being and channelled against nature.[249]

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[245] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 578–579.

[246] In contemporary thought—especially in Heidegger's philosophy—the dualism of evil points to the so-called attempt to "positivize" evil, in the sense that the idea of the absolute self (or spirit, to use Hegel's term) falls "into finite evil". The efforts to positivize evil, however, lead to its eternalization, so evil becomes an "ultimate reality" which is devoid of contingency. This pattern can be seen in Böhme, since he sees evil as connected with being of God. See Milbank, "Materialism and Transcendence", 221–254, in Kaplan and Cohen (eds.), *Theology and the Soul of the Liberal State*, 248.

[247] More about Lucifer's ignition in Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 143.

[248] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 264, n. 7.

This is why Böhme speaks of a laceration of nature which in fact happened as a result of Lucifer's rebellion against God, because he acted like a "fiery thunderbolt" in God's nature or as a terrible snake which not only rages and causes rampage, but also wants to disjoint nature itself. While God's nature seems to have been left undamaged—apart from the ignition of God's wrath—nature itself, or the world as nature, was powerfully struck by Lucifer's evil.[250] One should notice here Böhme's attempt to present God's nature as creation and vice versa, so the two phrases appear as synonymous although they are not. It is clear though that Böhme speaks of God's nature first then he points to nature itself, or to the world as nature, and he explains that both were under the direct agency of Lucifer's revolt.[251]

The immediate results thereof, however, appear to have invaded the natural world only, which is full of wild beasts as solid proof of Lucifer's revolt against God. Consequently, Lucifer proves his origin, and especially his transformation into the devil, because—as Böhme notices—he has always been called "the old snake", which accounts for the presence of actual snakes in the world.[252] In fact, Böhme underlines the fact that the world is full of crawling animals as an indication that corruption hit it really hard following Lucifer's revolt against God. Thus, vipers and other snakes, worms and vermin, toads and flies, as well as a wide range of other animals, all roam on the face of "this corrupted world". Wild animals and especially crawling beings are not the only manifestation of evil in the world according to Böhme; lightning, thunder, and hail also appear to be amongst the visible expressions of evil in the natural world:[253]

> Hence that takes its original, that the devil is called the old serpent, and also that there are adders and serpents in this corrupted world, moreover,

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[249] Lucifer disrupted the order of creation. Compare Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 24.

[250] Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 304.

[251] Böhme is capable of presenting Lucifer's revolt against God, but he cannot identify the reasons why Lucifer acted the way he did. Lucifer's reasons for going against God remain within the realm of mystery and riddles; if so, the very origin of evil is left without a clear explanation. See Wolfgang Röd, *Der Weg der Philosophie*, 1. Band: Altertum, Mittelalter, Renaissance (München: C.H. Beck, 1994), 435.

[252] In Böhme, the snake represents the negativity of the material world. See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 43.

[253] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 11:16, Böhme, *Aurora*, 15:65–79, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 579.

> all manner of vermin, or venomous broods of worms, toads, flies, lice, and fleas, and all such like things whatsoever, and from hence also tempestuous weather of lightening, thundering, flashing, and hail stones, take their original in this world.[254]

Böhme's presentation of evil in the world appears to follow the basic lines of the traditional Christian doctrine of sin in the sense that sin is presented as a reality which does not originate in God. Lucifer is clearly the culprit when it comes to the starting point of evil and Böhme presents both Lucifer's actions and what happens in the world in close connection with Lucifer's being but, at the same time, he cannot totally separate the reality of evil from God's being. To be sure, God is definitely not the source of evil, and Böhme is very clear in this respect, but the reality of evil exists also because God seems to have permitted it and he permitted it because the quality of severity or acerbity is one of the most fundamental features of his being.[255]

In Böhme, the state of the world is totally dependent on Lucifer's actions, so the corruption of the world with all its accompanying features is the direct result of Lucifer's revolt against God.[256] It appears that Lucifer's action against God was thoroughly evil in itself, so it is logical that all its consequences should share the same, fundamental intensity of evil. What should be noticed here is that evil not only derives from the constitution of the created world, but it is also dependent on it. In other words, evil has its origin in nature, or in matter, and it is because of this that evil spreads itself throughout the materiality of the created world.[257] In this respect, it can be said that, according to Böhme, evil seems to be creaturely although not necessarily material in the sense in which the world is material. Evil is "luciferic"—that is, creaturely and spiritual given that angels are spiritual beings—but its concrete manifestation in the world of humanity takes material forms. This is why Böhme writes that most features of this world, such as severity, toughness, thickness, coldness, and darkness, appear to be material manifestations of evil since they are directly connected with the concrete existence of the world. Lucifer's fall is the origin of all these characteristics; in other words, the evil of the world springs from the evil of Lucifer's evil actions against God.[258] The materiality of the world, which in Böhme seems to incapsulate the idea and reality of evil, is given by stones. Thus, the stones appear to represent the condensation or the contraction of the saltpeter's quality of severity, which can also be seen in the possible freezing of water (also to be conceived in contracted terms during its existence "in the saltpeter"). The image of stones and water, both in condensed forms, seems to portray the origin of evil in its initial stages, while it was still "in the saltpeter", or within God's being within the form of severity.[259]

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[254] Behmen, "Aurora", 154.

[255] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 579.

[256] Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 23.

[257] See Bell, "Boehme, Jakob (1575–1624)", 42, in Bell, "Boehme, Jakob", 42, in Carney (eds.), *Renaissance and Reformation, 1500–1620*, 42.

[258] Compare O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 43.

It must be stressed here that evil did not exist in God and does not originate in God in its active form, but it can be traced to God since Lucifer, and the entire creation for that matter, originate in God. The origin of evil though is Lucifer, and his actions infected the entire world with corruption.[260] Everything which can be conceived to exist is connected with the reality of evil, and in this respect, stones and water are proof thereof. The natural and material world, however, did not exist "during the time of angels", so Lucifer and the angelic world precede the actual creation of the material world. Evil though runs through both following Lucifer's revolt, so both the spiritual world of angels and the material world of humanity share the same evil as fundamental to their existence.[261] The material world, on the other hand, cannot be conceived apart from its origin in God, who created it, so the materiality of the world—which contains within itself the actual manifestation of evil and can be seen in "silver, gold, stones, clothes, beasts, and humans", or in everything which exists in a material form—can be traced back to God's wrath. Without the connection between the materiality of the world and God's wrath, one could not speak of the former, at least not according to Böhme. Thus, the material world cannot just come into existence; it needs a "trigger", which is God and especially his wrath, which—at least partially—accounts for the reality of evil in the world.[262]

Again, it is not a direct causation, in the sense that God created evil, but it is nevertheless a real liaison since the world was created by God. The context of the manifestation of evil seems to be, again, the reality of the created world, since Lucifer turned "the sweet water" into "fiery severity" within his own *corpus* or body.[263] Now, Lucifer's body may not have been material, but it was still created, so the *locus* of evil is creation, regardless of its materiality or spirituality. Human beings though seem to understand the reality of evil in a better way when it is explained as referring to the materiality of the world, and this is why Böhme seems to point to the manifestations of evil within the beasts of the world.[264] Evil was triggered by Lucifer's cockiness, who wanted to overthrow the whole Godhead through his rebellious actions, so all the creatures of the world were grasped by the reality of evil "in the heart". This is to say that evil engulfs everything, so that the very essence of materiality seems to be evil or at least described in terms which refer to evil. This is why, according to Böhme, Lucifer can be called the "prince of this world", since there seems to be nothing in the created world which escapes the reality of his evil:[265]

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[259] Weeks, *Boehme*, 106–107.

[260] See also Szulakowska, *The Alchemy of Light*, 180.

[261] Despite the evil which runs through both angels and humans, the good is also present in both realities. See Hessayon, *"Gold Tried in the Fire"*, 288.

[262] Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303.

[263] Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 23–24.

> Thus has king Lucifer in his body turned the sweet water into a sour sharpness, intending therewith, in his haughty mindedness, to rule in the whole deity. And he has brought it so far to pass, that, in this world, with that sharpness, he reaches into the heart of all living creatures, as also into vegetables, leaves, and grass, and into all other things, as a king and prince of this world.[266]

What Lucifer did with respect to God is quite clear because it was an evident act of revolt against God; what is less clear, at least for Böhme, seems to be God's action as a result of Lucifer's rebellion. One may rightly ask—and Böhme is aware of it—whether God resisted Lucifer in any way or whether he retaliated against him.[267] Before answering this question, Böhme makes it clear that the conflict between Lucifer and God is no ordinary fact; it is not a battle between "a man or a beast" against God. As a matter of fact, it is a true war between gods, because it was God against God that became engaged in this fight. It was a power against another power which resisted against each other, so what seems to happen is the juxtaposition of two gods of relatively equal powers.[268] Böhme does not elaborate on the details concerning the superiority of God over Lucifer, but one may ask why Baur decided to quote this particular text in his account of Gnosticism. The answer seems to be obvious in the sense that Baur may have noticed the evident dualism which Böhme appears to have postulated between Lucifer and God the Father when he mentions that a god acted against another god in this conflict. It seems that neither Böhme, nor Baur is interested in the idea of superiority (of God over Lucifer); what presents interest to them is rather the fact that two power are engaged in a conflict and that there are two emotions behind the fight itself.[269]

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[264] Böhme's conviction that Lucifer's evil manifests itself in the animal kingdom is considered "strange theology" in more conservative—specifically Roman-Catholic—quarters. See Groschel, *I Am with Your Always*, 304.

[265] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:70, 99, 103. See also Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 579.

[266] Behmen, "Aurora", 146.

[267] For a possible explanation, see Weeks, *Boehme*, 16.

[268] The war between gods is paralleled by the war between wrath and love. See Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, 590.

On the one hand there is Lucifer's rebellion, but also his conceitedness, and on the other there is God's wrath. God decided to use his wrath against Lucifer since the friendly love of his innermost being was rejected by Lucifer and consequently it is superfluous in the conflict.[270] Where love no longer works, anger seems to be a right kind of replacement mainly because Lucifer's intention was to overthrow God himself. Such a situation needed restoration; thus, since love was no longer able to balance Lucifer's rebellion against God's dominion, the last resort appears to have been wrath. God himself had to ignite his wrath against Lucifer, and it seems that Baur may see in Böhme a kind of necessary balance between the two conflictual powers.[271] God is essentially love and so was Lucifer created; thus, love was essential to both. When he rebelled against God, Lucifer resorted to conceitedness and pride, features which he had to ignite against God since they were not fundamentally his as created by God.[272]

On the other hand, God also had to ignite a feeling which is not essentially a representation of his innermost nature, and this was his wrath. To be sure, God and Lucifer were both characterized by love in the beginning, so when the conflict burst they both had to ignite feelings against each other somehow to counterbalance the display of forces: Lucifer his pride and God his wrath.[273]

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[269] See Howard H. Brinton, *The Mystic Will. Based upon a Study of the Philosophy of Jacob Boehme* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1930), 208.

[270] In Hegel's understanding of Böhme, the reality of wrath moves in a circle: it originates in God, it becomes the otherness of God in the fallen Lucifer, it turns into the spirit of Lucifer, and—in doing so—it becomes a moment of God's being. See also Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 143. The idea of circular movement is also present in Böhme, who applies it to the concept of *Vernunft*. In Böhme, *Vernunft* is the human reason which cannot understand God's kingdom, but searches things from their exteriority in a circular movement. See David M. Levy, "No Time to Think: Reflections on Information Technology an Contemplative Scholarship", 237–249, in *Ethics and Information Technology* 9.4 (2007): 245.

[271] The conflict, however, is much deeper since it is also present in the very being of God and his seven qualities. See Godwin, *The Golden Thread*, 115.

[272] See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 304.

[273] The same conflict is present in Schlegel. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 177.

God's saltpeter was the *locus* for the ignition of God's wrath mainly because Lucifer lived there, so God's saltpeter appears to be not only a reference to God's being, but also an indication of his dominion over creation. God struck back and he did so by zealously igniting his wrath against Lucifer. The immediate result was that, while Lucifer's kingly position did not change in the sense that he remained a king or a prince of creation;[274] what changed dramatically was the status of his dominion: his kingdom now became "dark, deserted, and evil", an indication that a different creation should follow from it, a reference to the natural world which is essentially evil, provided that—as Böhme writes—Lucifer's rebellion against God preceded the actual beginning of the physical realm:[275]

> Should God withstand him then with anger or wrath, which indeed must be done at length, then God must have kindled himself in his qualities in the *Salitter*, wherein king Lucifer dwelt, and must in the strong zeal or jealousy strive and fight against him, which he did, and so this striving made this kingdom so dark, waster, and evil, that another creation must needs afterwards follow upon it.[276]

If an order of creation can be discerned at this point, this would include the following moments: God's being which existed in itself for ever, the creation of archangels and their respective dominions, Lucifer's rebellion against God and the corruption of his realm, and then the creation of the natural world which shares the corruption of Lucifer's realm. Therefore, evil appears to be a reality which manifests itself actively within creation, first in Lucifer's being and realm, and then in the natural world.[277]

Lucifer and the Foundation of Dualism

As far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's presentation of Lucifer and the origin of evil in creation comes very close to Manichaeism. It is in this respect, he thinks, that the relationship between Böhme's system and Manichaeism present itself in a clearly distinctive way.[278] Böhme's presentation of Lucifer reminds Baur of the Manichaeistic description of "world princes" and especially of their model, the "Persian Ahriman".[279] The connection between Lucifer and Ahriman should be evident since Lucifer is the one who destroyed God's creation and the world by bringing evil within it and Ahriman is the destructive spirit of the Persian religion.[280] According to Baur, Böhme and Manichaeism share the same perspective on the world, with the difference that Böhme does not promote an original dualism; in other words, he does not support the idea of a principle—that is Lucifer—which is independent of God. In Böhme, Baur argues, the opposition of the two principles—God and Lucifer—is presented as if it were an actual unity.[281] In fact, Baur is convinced that Böhme tries his best to prove that the conflict between God and Lucifer is nothing but a unified reality. Consequently, Böhme seems unable to conceive God and Lucifer based on the idea of laceration, but rather in terms of unification.[282]

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[274] Compare Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, 228, and Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 143–144.

[275] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:72–73, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 579–580.

[276] Behmen, "Aurora", 142.

[277] For an informed discussion about the evil character of creation in Gnostic thought and Böhme, which contains references to Thomas J.J. Altizer, see O'Regan, *Gnostic Return in Modernity*, 67–68.

Baur though is equally convinced that Böhme's system is characterized mostly by dualism rather than monism.[283] For Baur, the monism of the juxtaposition of God and Lucifer is not so powerful in Böhme as is, for instance, the dualism resulting from the conflict between the two. It appears that in Böhme both God and Lucifer are described in clear lines, so they both present themselves as powerful individual characters. The features of both God and Lucifer can be seen in a very distinctive way, so this is why Baur believes that Böhme's system is thoroughly dualistic.[284] A clarification though must be done at this point as it results from Baur's comparison between Böhme and Manichaeism. Thus, while for Böhme the most important aspect is the idea of dualism, namely the coexistence of God and Lucifer as some sort of unity, in Manichaeism the most fundamental characteristic of the religious system is the concept of the two principles, the good and the evil. Nevertheless, Böhme does come close to Manichaeism because he presents both God and Lucifer in a very distinctive way despite his conviction that they represent a unity rather than a duality. The two principles, however, do not present only the idea of God and his opposing Lucifer, but also two fundamental realities of creation.[285]

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[278] O'Regan does not fully agree with Baur, in the sense that while Böhme does use dualism, his dualism is not identical with that proposed by Manichaeism. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 230.

[279] Manichaeism was crucially important to Baur, so this is perhaps why he tends to overlap Manichaeistic dualism with Böhme's dualism. See also van Oort (eds.), *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica*, 4.

[280] For a parallel between Lucifer and Ahriman, see Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303.

[281] See Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 150.

[282] Compare Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 44.

[283] See Vassányi, *Anima Mundi*, 140, n. 35.

[284] The dualism of principles is evident in Böhme. See Grimstad, *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann*'s Doktor Faustus, 42–43.

The first is the "dark, material, corporeal" reality which embodies all natural powers that give natural life its acerbity, energy, and consistency, while the second is the intelligence which illuminates the "darkened soil of nature" through light; the latter is the principle which is capable of overwhelming the original severity and strength of nature by means of love.[286] Baur senses that these definitions may not be enough so he attempts to clarify them by pointing out that the first principle is nature, while the second is the human person. This means that "the natural" or "the reality of nature" is religiously represented by Lucifer, while the "personal" or the "reality of personhood" is described—also in religious terms—by the idea of God.[287] This can also indicate that, in Baur, the concept of humanity is not only described through the notion of God; humanity itself is seen in divine terms because the idea of God speaks of the idealized human being.[288] In Baur, God does not seem to have an ontological and metaphysical existence; in other words, God does not exist as a personal supernatural being. God is only the concept which points to the idea of personhood and transcendence, which helps humanity understand itself as divinity. God does not exist in reality; the only person which really exists is the human being, and its existence is confined by the natural world. In this context, however, where evil is omnipresent, the human being—which is also thoroughly affected by evil—is capable of seeing itself in divine terms, so God is the result of man's rationality and, at the same time, the idealized projection of himself.[289]

In Baur's opinion, Böhme's essentially dualistic system can be considered in monistic terms only when one understands that the first principle cannot exist without the second and the other way around. In fact, Baur writes that the first principle is the precondition of the second, while the second develops itself only on the foundation provided by the first. In other words, God can be fully understood only through nature, and nature receives its complete meaning exclusively based on the idea of God.[290] It is through this particular relationship between the two principles, God and nature, that the eternal Godhead can be conceived in the eternal birth of its own being. This is to say that very essence of the notion of divinity cannot be pictured without its fundamental connection with nature.[291]

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[285] It seems that Böhme's dualism influenced Herder, who was preoccupied with the dualistic myths of creation from the ancient Near East. See Hugh Barr Nisbet, *Herder and Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1970), 76.

[286] For details about the dualism of light and darkness in Böhme, see Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 66.

[287] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 580–581.

[288] For instance, in Baur, Christ is seen as the God-man, the man who represents the universality of humanity. See Jasper Hopkins, "Nicholas of Cusa's Intellectual Relationship to Anselm of Canterbury", 54–73, in Peter J. Casarella (eds.), *Cusanus. The Legacy of Learned Ignorance* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 64.

[289] For a similar approach, see Delbert R. Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate. A History and Evaluation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17–19.

The example given by Baur is the relationship between God the Father and the Son and, since the Son is born from the Father, it appears that the Son were part of nature despite his declared divinity. Consequently, if the Father represents the notion of God and the Son is part of nature, it means that the Son's divinity is only conceptual. This can imply that the Son is the representation of man in his best state as encapsulation of all human values; that is that the Son is the image of the "perfect", idealized human being, which incorporates within him the best of humanity's worth.[292] The idea of God takes humanity even further into the realm of divine perfection because the Son himself is somehow "perfected" by projecting his historical existence into the meta-historical imagery of divinity; this means that while the Son represents humanity at its best, God speaks of humanity at the pinnacle of its perfection. The Son cannot exist without God, which is to say that humanity cannot exist without its most idealized image represented by the idea of divinity.

At the same time though, the Son is born of the Father, which means that there is in him what Baur calls a "degree and potency" of divine life, so that God is truly God only in the Son. This shows again Baur's conviction that the best way to speak of humanity is in terms of divinity; thus, the idea of God cannot be properly understood apart from the reality of humanity, which means that the human being gives full meaning to the idea of God.[293]

One can sense here an attempt to de-objectify God by objectifying the human being. The true reality of history is given by the human being, which can understand itself only through the notion of God. In other words, God exists only in the human being and only when the human being is capable of perceiving itself in divine terms.[294] There is, however, a clear separation of principles in Böhme, Baur believes, since both God and humanity are clearly delineated at least at a purely conceptual level. God manifests himself as Father and Son; which can mean that the idea of divinity finds its full accomplishment through the notion of God as creator and the idea of humanity as creation. One should not lose sight of the fact that the dialectics between God and humanity imply the idea of perfection and, consequently, goodness. On the other hand, however, there is the reality of evil which is present throughout creation. In this case, the same separation of principles accounts for giving Lucifer his *Dasein*, or his individual entity, being, and existence.[295]

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[290] See Weeks, *Boehme*, 105.

[291] This is because, in Böhme, God exhibits a powerful desire to manifest himself externally in the materiality of nature. See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 43.

[292] In Baur, this is clearly a Hegelian influence. See Althaus, *Hegel*, 250–251.

[293] On the one hand, man becomes deified, while on the other hand, God—and especially the Son of God—becomes humanized. See Denham, *Northrop Frye*, 174.

The unity of reality, therefore, which is the unity of creation, can be fully understood when the unity between the Father and the Son includes the reality of Lucifer's existence. Lucifer finds himself in total opposition to the Son, but the two realities do shape the natural world. Thus, good and evil are both part of the world of nature and they both find their full definition in the reality of divinity. The principle which binds God and the Son together also exists in Lucifer, so it is the same principle which exists in Lucifer's own "being-for-himself", which gives shape to his conceptual existence through the idea of selfishness.[296] The evil represented by Lucifer is totally opposed by the good incapsulated by the Son, but they both exist in conjunction with the perfection of God, so the evil and the good of the human being cannot be properly conceived without the image of the notion of God.[297]

It should be noticed at this point that what Baur sees in Böhme's presentation of the antagonism between God and creation, respectively between the idealized image of the human being and the corresponding reality of man in history is a sort of eternal situation. To use Baur's words, "the opposition and the difference" which exists between Lucifer and God is a reality which reaches its culmination in Lucifer, but it has been so since the beginning.[298] The existence of evil in the world, which is so vividly encapsulated by Böhme's presentation of Lucifer, is an eternal reality which describes how the world is and how humanity works in history. This is very unlikely to change if we are to believe Baur because the essence of the world and that of humanity seems to have been the same for ever and they do not show evidence of any significant alterations in future.

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[294] Compare O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 52.

[295] See also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23–25.

[296] Cf. Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jakob Boehme*, 124.

[297] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 581.

[298] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 108.

Nevertheless, the opposition and the difference which Baur sees in Böhme's presentation of Lucifer—as contrasted with God—speaks of an eternal and permanent dualism which reveals the mechanics of the world as well as the functionality of creation as history. Good and evil have always existed in the historical world as the essence of life and they would appear to be unlikely to change at all.[299] It is, however, the most fundamental desire of the human being to see itself in a positive light, so this is why humanity speaks of God as a manifestation of its own idealized existence. This explains man's desire to place God above Lucifer and good above evil in the world, which in turns shows why the Christian religion prefers God, and not Lucifer. Baur highlights Böhme's conviction that God the Son is above Lucifer because "on the kingly throne of the outcast Lucifer, now sits our king and Lucifer's kingdom is now his", and the good—representing God by means of light—eventually prevails:[300]

> But the seven spirits, which are in an angel, which generate the light and understanding, they are bound and united with the whole God, that they should not qualify in any other way, either or more vehemently, than God himself, but that there should be one and the same manner and way between them both.[301]

The immediate result of this dramatic change whereby Lucifer is cast away and God the Son takes over his kingdom describes once again a dualistic situation which has always existed in the reality of the world. The Son's divine influence—or, in other words, the overarching influence of good in the world—led to the creation of another "angelic host" in the reality of the world. The angelic host which replaced Lucifer's fallen angels is evidently a means to say that the good takes over the manifestation of evil in the world, because Böhme speaks of the "*locus* of this world" as the playground of the actual activity of the good and its fight against evil.[302] The good and its fight against evil, has existed for ever, since the angelic host of the Son—or the actual manifestation of the good—is a reality which has an eternal existence. The angelic host of the good was placed, as Böhme reveals, "in the human beings" as an indication that humanity's struggle against evil has always been there, namely in the innermost corners of the human being throughout its existence in the history of the world:[303]

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[299] Compare Faire, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, 61.

[300] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:103. The next indication is *Aurora* 73:36, which evidently does not exist in the Böhme's text. Another passage which could fit Böhme's argument is *Aurora* 13:36, which speaks about light and the birth thereof within the reality of the seven original spirits. See also Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 581.

[301] Behmen, "Aurora", 123.

[302] The fight of good against evil acquires even epistemological connotations since the knowledge of the good can be attained only through evil. See Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991, first published 1919), 255.

> (…) When God had created the third principle, after the fall of the devils, when they fell from their glory (for they had been angels, standing in the place of this world), yet nevertheless he would that his will and purpose should stand, and therefore he would give to the place of this world an angelical host again, which should continue to stand for ever.[304]

It must be underlined here that, as far as Baur is concerned, Böhme describes the opposition and the difference between God and Lucifer as cancellation. The opposition and the difference between God and Lucifer can be said to exist but they have for ever done so in a state of cancellation. This seems to imply that while one can theoretically speak about the opposition and the difference between God and Lucifer, that is about the opposition and the difference between good and evil, they are in fact two facets of the same reality.[305] There is an evident dualism here between good and evil, which is theoretical in the sense that good and evil can be discerned from the perspective of humanity, but they both represent the same unique reality of the natural world (from the perspective of the natural world itself). In other words, only human beings can see the good and the evil in the world; the world itself is totally unable to discern good and evil as it exists as a single, unique reality.[306] This is why, in Baur, the Son is the "cancelled opposition"; the image of the Son cancels the opposition between God and Lucifer because he manages to take over the reality of evil. For the Son, Lucifer was utterly perfect before his fall, and this is the image of the idealized human being proposed by Baur: humanity should strive to achieve the state which is described by the lack of opposition between

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[303] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 10:8, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 581.

[304] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 66.

[305] This reality could be considered divine, since good and evil coincide in God. See Koetsier, "Arthur Schopenhauer and L.E.J. Brouwer: A Comparison", 569–594, in Koetsier and Bergmans (eds.), *Mathematics of the Divine*, 584.

[306] This is because reaching divinity is impossible without the experience of evil. See also Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 150.

God and Lucifer before the latter's fall, when the reality of the good reigned supreme, and evil was only a possibility.[307]

This explains why Baur sees in Böhme a "cancellation of the difference" which expresses itself through the representation of the good which overpowers evil. If good is stronger than evil, then it means that the image of God the Father is more powerful than the image of Lucifer.[308] In other words, Lucifer is no longer understood as "real"; from now on, he should be seen as a possibility. This possibility, however, is real because the reality of humanity contains both the good and the evil which exist in the natural world. What is important here though consists of the dualism which Baur sees in Böhme who seems to present God the Son as the good counterpart of the evil Lucifer. The image of Lucifer decreases in importance as compared with the image of God the Son, since Lucifer can no longer imagine himself; humanity imagines Lucifer as representing the evil reality of the world, while the image of the Son counterbalances the same image. Baur is convinced that the reality and the independence of the opposition between good and evil is dependent on Lucifer, although Lucifer cancels himself and thus becomes a possibility.[309] As a possibility, Lucifer is no longer real as a being or as an entity, but he is real as a representation of the reality of evil which exists in the world. In other words, the possibility represented by Lucifer does exist and it exists in itself. Evil is real in the world, and so is the image of Lucifer which represents the same evil. Lucifer though is no longer real in ontological terms. This is why there are two sides in the first principle, which is represented in Böhme by bitterness, severity, and fire—in a word, acerbity.

Consequently, two different and antagonistic directions can be discerned within the same principle. The first is God the Father, which is also the image of the good, if the direction leads towards the Son.[310] The second, however, is the opposing direction which leads away from God's heart. This implies resistance against God's heart and the willful intention to avoid it. The same direction also contains the desire to insist upon itself, so there is an evident egocentricity implied here, which pushes God's heart away. This second direction is also based on egoistic individuality, which refuses to come closer to God's heart.[311] All these features of the second direction can be summed up by the word "evil", which Baur ascribes to what he believes to be the second side of reality along with the good. Good and evil, therefore, are two sides representing the same unique reality; this is why Baur is convinced that Böhme promoted a dualistic image of the world, which consists of both good and evil or, as Baur describes them, of two opposing directions.

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[307] See also Tom Rockmore, James G. Colbert, William J. Gavin, and Thomas J. Blakeley, *Marxism and Alternatives. Towards the Conceptual Interaction among Soviet Philosophy, Neo-Thomism, Pragmatism, and Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing/Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1981), 22.

[308] In Böhme, God is not only more powerful than Lucifer, but he also uses evil for the purposes of his self-revelation. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 25.

[309] Lucifer is the possibility of evil which is conceptually associated with the idea of chaos. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 138.

[310] Compare Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

What Baur believes to be Böhme's dualism develops as these two sides, the good and the evil, are presented by means of the opposition between darkness, materiality, and egoism on the one hand, and light, spirituality, and universality on the other. These opposing characteristics, however, make up the same, unique principle which describes the reality of the world.[312] It should be noticed here that Baur's understanding of Böhme pushes him to postulate the existence of good and evil as complementary realities of the world, although Böhme does not necessarily present them as such. While Baur speaks of the cancellation of the difference which is given by Lucifer, Böhme appears to treat both God and Lucifer as separate entities which exist—or which have an ontological status as well as an objective, personal reality—beyond the actual reality of the world.[313]

This is why it seems that Baur pushes Böhme's presentation of God and Lucifer too much into what he believes to be a fundamental dualism representing the conflict, but also the coexistence, of good and evil. Böhme's description of Lucifer, for instance, is thoroughly active, in the sense that Lucifer seems to have taken the initiative in separating himself from God and while Lucifer and God may be seen as representations of good and evil, Böhme though does not appear to reduce them to a set of mere "directions" or "tendencies" as they are presented in Baur.[314] This, however, pushes the whole discussion towards the idea of dualism, so fundamentally vital for the Gnosticism that Baur sees in Böhme.

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[311] See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 143 n. 59.

[312] See also Frithjof Schuon, "The Question of Evangelicalism", 5–35, in Mateus Soares de Azevedo (eds.), *Ye Shall Know the Truth. Christianity and the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005), 34.

[313] Compare Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 27.

[314] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 581–582.

CHAPTER 3

The Structure of Dualism

Gnosis as Fundamental Dualism

The third aspect Baur learns from Böhme is the structure of dualism and especially the structure of the dualism which he sees as part of Gnosticism. Nevertheless, in order for Baur to prove that Böhme's thought bears a wide range of resemblances to Gnosticism, but also with Manichaeism, he resorts to an excerpt from Böhme's preface to his *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, which eventually leads to the notion of Gnostic dualism—the last element Böhme bequeathed to Baur. Thus, Baur extensively quotes Böhme from what he considers to be a Gnostic[1] and Manichaeistic[2] discourse. To be more precise, Baur chooses from Böhme a series of questions, which point to the fact that man is unable to make sense of his inner constitution without indicating that there is a connection between his being and God, or the divine being.[3]

At the same time, Baur highlights Böhme's conviction that the human being is fundamentally dualistic, and this results clearly from the series of questions presented in Böhme's work. There are six questions posed by Böhme, and which Baur mentions in quotation for the sake of his argument that, in Böhme, the human being is dualistic in Gnostic and Manichaeistic terms. Thus, the first question is how can man make sense of the way in which he was created, namely the fact that he is caught between good and evil:[4]

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[1] Baur's conviction about Böhme is shared by Jung. See Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Alchemy*, 46.

[2] O'Regan disagrees with Baur because, while Böhme may have used the dualistic language of Manichaeism, his dualism is different from that of the Manichaeans. Thus, in Manichaeistic thought, the two opposing principles are ontologically different from one another, while in Böhme they seem to share the same ontological root or identity. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 230. Gibbons, on the other hand, is convinced that Böhme was not a Manichaean. See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.

[3] It is important to understand here that man makes sense of himself by looking at God. See also Wartofsky, *Feuerbach*, 74.

[4] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, Vorrede:13, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 557–558. See also Kirschner, *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 145.

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> Now seeing man knows that he is such a twofold man, in the capacity of good and evil, and that they are both his own, and that he himself is that only man which is both good and evil, and that he shall have the reward of either of them, and to which of them he inclines in this life, to that his soul goes when he dies (…).[5]

It is clear here that Baur wants to indicate here Böhme's conviction that the inner, natural constitution of the human being is essentially dualistic, and it is of paramount importance for the human being to realize that his dualistic structure includes—from the very beginning—a close relationship between good and evil in his existence on earth. The second question is how can man realize where his good and evil desires or instincts come from. The direct implication here is the fact that, while man realizes the reality of good and evil in his life, these are not features which reside in him exclusively, but which also seem to exist beyond the natural existence of humanity.[6] The third question completes this particular argument in the sense that, while the second question stresses the fact that good and evil in man have an origin beyond the human being itself—since Böhme alludes to resurrection and the possibility of life after death—this time, as Böhme shows in his third question, man is assured that good and evil are indeed part of his innermost structure.[7] The direct consequence is, according to Böhme, that the human being was created from the start with a powerful desire for both good and evil:[8]

> (…) he [man] shall arise at the last day in power, in his labour [and works] which he exercised here, and live therein eternally, and also be glorified therein, and that shall be his eternal food and sustenance, therefore it is very necessary for him to know himself, how it is with him, and whence the impulsion to good and evil comes, and what indeed the good and evil merely are in himself (…).[9]

The fourth question poses the issue of man's origin, so Böhme asks whether the human being can really know where he comes from. At this point, he does not seem to imply anything at all, in the sense that the origin of man may or may not lie beyond the natural boundaries of the world, but he does point out that man has an origin and it seems to be crucial for the human being to be aware of it. The reality of man's awareness of his own origin must be coupled with the knowledge of its exact source because this seems to be the only way whereby the human being can assess not only the point of his inception as a form of life, but also the quality of his existence.[10] This is why the fifth question asked by Böhme does not insist on the origin of man as a form of life, but on the origin of man as a human being, or as a form of life which is able to understand and evaluate the quality of its own morality. In other words, Böhme asks whether man can know the source of all the good things and the bad things within his existence.[11] The sixth and last question sheds a bit more light on how Böhme understands the reality of man's existence and it is now that he discloses his belief in a supernatural reality which is interwoven with the natural existence of the human being in history. So he asks where does evil come from and how is it possible for it to exist, alongside the good, both in the devil and the human being, as well as in all other creatures:[12]

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[5] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 7.

[6] In Böhme, man's dualism is a mirror of God's dualism. See also Turner, *History of Philosophy*, 392.

[7] See also Hessayon, *"Gold Tried in the Fire"*, 288.

[8] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, Vorrede:13, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 558.

[9] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 7.

> (…) whence they [good and evil] are stirred, what property is the original of all the good, and of all the evil, from whence, and by what [means] the devil was a holy angel, and man also created good, and that also such untowardness is found to be in all creatures, biting, tearing, worrying, and hurting one another, and such enmity, strife, and hatred, in all creatures, and that every thing is so at odds with itself, as we see it to be not only in the living creatures, but also in the stars, elements, earth, stones, metals, in wood, leaves, and grass, there is a poison and malignity in all things, and it is found that it muse be so, or else there would be no life, nor mobility, nor would there be any color nor virtue, neither thickness nor thinness, nor any perceptibility or sensibility, but all would be as nothing.[13]

This particular question is probably the most complex of Böhme's interrogative cluster because it not only searches for the origin of evil in the natural world of man, but it also tries to investigate the source of evil in the supernatural reality of the devil. This indicates that, for Böhme, reality is a combination of naturalism and supernaturalism, in which good and evil are described not only as necessary for the actual existence of the whole creation, but also as constitutive for the functionality of creation. It is as if, in Böhme, creation would not be able to exist without the tension between good and evil. This does not rule out the possibility of a perfect creation as in traditional theology, but it does postulate the necessity of evil as compulsory for its proper functionality. At the same time, he seems to imply that existence manifests itself at two levels: history and meta-history, immanence and transcendence, physics and metaphysics.[14] Whatever happens on earth must somehow have a correspondent beyond it, in the sense that the essence of reality is essentially dualistic.[15] Interesting as it may be, the two sides of reality—natural and supernatural, physical and metaphysical, historical and meta-historical, immanent and transcendent—seem to be connected by a moral common denominator because the origin of the beings that inhabit the dual constitution of reality is investigated by Böhme in connection with not only the idea, but also the actual existence of good and evil.[16]

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[10] The real issue here is the origin of man's soul. See Mills, *The Unconscious Abyss*, 24.

[11] See Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 176, and Grimstad, *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann's* Doktor Faustus, 42.

[12] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, Vorrede:13, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 558–559.

[13] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 7.

Even more interesting at this point appears to be the fact that the disclosure of the dual character of reality itself is given not only by the dualism between good and evil, but by Böhme's insistence on the manifestation of evil within the dualistic sphere of created or material existence, which is circumvented by man and the devil.[17] It should be pointed out here as well that, since man and the devil constitute the two poles of reality, the character thereof is not only natural and supernatural, physical and metaphysical, historical and metahistorical, immanent and transcendent, but also corporeal and spiritual. In this respect, the dualism of light and darkness is what explains the actual existence of the two poles of reality, man and the devil, especially regarding what Baur believes to be Böhme's Manichaeistic convictions.

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[14] Weeks believes that Böhme's language of immanence and transcendence "envelops all being, all becoming, in a veil of mystery". In other words, immanence and transcendence are no longer clear-cut realities as in traditional, orthodox theology (in Böhme's context, Lutheran orthodoxy). On the contrary, in Böhme, immanence and transcendence tend to refer to realities which ofter times blend into one single existence. See Weeks, *Boehme*, 101.

[15] Böhme senses the presence of a different world in addition to the material realm. See Huston Smith, Charles Grob, Robert Jesse, Gary Bravo, Alise Agar, and Roger Walsh, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import? A 40-Year Perspective", 120–140, in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 44.2 (2004): 124–125.

[16] The moral aspect of the human being is so important to Böhme that he believes in the genetic origin of good and evil. Thus, good and evil are dispositions which attach to the child while he is in his mother's womb, but they always follow the moral pattern of the parents. This is why Böhme believed that good parents beget good children, while bad parents beget bad children. See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 100.

[17] Böhme's conviction that the manifestation of evil in the material world should be explained by the connection between man and the devil (Lucifer) can be found in Goethe. See Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, 51.

The Dualism of Light and Darkness

Despite the differences between what Baur considers to be Böhme's dualistic system and the religious philosophy proposed by Manichaeism, he believes that Böhme's theology cannot take a different route than Manichaeism itself. In other words—if we are to accept Baur's argument—Böhme's ideas will eventually end up confirming Manichaeism's religious philosophy, so Böhme is unable to produce and develop a system which represents a significant step forward in comparison to Manichaeism.[18] For instance, Baur argues, Böhme's idea of creation cannot detach itself from the influence of Manicheism, in the sense that creation can be based exclusively on Lucifer's attempt to ignite the divine saltpeter. This means that, according to Baur, it is Manichaeism which provides Böhme with a foundation for his doctrine of creation which originates in the disturbance of God's saltpeter through the rebellious actions of Lucifer.[19]

This is clearly a reference to the creation of the world, because it is the world which results from the moulding of an already existing matter, which seems to be God's saltpeter. In fact, this is precisely what differentiates Böhme's system from Manicheism. To be sure, in Manicheistic religious philosophy, the two principles—darkness and light—find themselves in a state of conflict from the very beginning; this is to say that Manichaeism believes that the principle of light is under attack from the principle of darkness. It is clear, therefore, that darkness and light fight each other from the start, and this is the most fundamental feature of creation in Manicheism.[20]

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[18] Hunt would agree with Baur provided that one realizes that Manicheans believed in two distinct principles (one of which is outside the divine essence), while in Böhme both principles are included in God. See Hunt, *An Essay on Pantheism*, 187. Manichaeistic influences can be identified in Böhme through Schelling. See Reid, *Coleridge, Form, and Symbol*, 146.

[19] In Böhme, however, Lucifer is part of God's being, at least in the beginning, so his evil was not "a reality existing next to God". See Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 194.

[20] See also Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy*, 66.

When it comes to the idea of creation in Böhme, however, Baur believes that the two principles of light and darkness were together at the beginning. In other words, darkness and light are mixed together in Böhme. The two principles, light and darkness, can be understood as separate—in the sense that each principle can be identified distinctively, so one can still speak of a certain opposition between the two—but they are still together despite their opposition.[21] In Manichaeism, things are different because what comes first is the attack of darkness against the light, and they one can identify the two principles as conflicting realities.[22] The distinction between Böhme and Manichaeism seems utterly important for Baur because it places Böhme closer to what Baur believes to be the idealized image of the human being, which is in turn represented by the notion of God. While in Manichaeism, the two principles which are forever in conflict share this state of war from the very beginning, in Böhme there seems to be harmony between the two before the conflict itself.[23] This indicates that, in Manichaeism, one can identify two distinct deities or gods which fight each other from the start and neither can be said to overpower the other.[24]

This poses a problem to Baur's idea of creation and its subsequent anthropology, because the permanent conflict between light and darkness, or between the gods representing the two principles, points to a human being which is in permanent conflict with itself. Böhme on the other hand promotes a holistic, harmonious perspective on the human being which is pictured as the absence of a hopeless conflict between the two principles which constitute it. Thus, man can be conceived as a being which, although he has both light and darkness within him, still can harness darkness by means of light despite the fact that everything is at odds with itself throughout the whole of creation.[25] Böhme's mentioning of the God who controls Lucifer is an indication that light prevails over darkness and, as God is the image of the idealized human being, man can be understood to be the being which is able to control its darkness through the application of light.[26]

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[21] Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 64.

[22] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 582–583.

[23] See F.E. Peters, *The Monotheists. Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition*, Volume 2: The Words and Will of God (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 139.

[24] More details in Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, 53.

[25] This is because, in Böhme, darkness exhibits a powerful longing for light. See Weeks, *Boehme*, 123.

[26] In Christ, this becomes a real possibility. See Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, 128.

To take things even further, the idea of evil is therefore explained as a reality which can be contained through the practical application of the good. Man is able to perceive the good and the evil which exist both in creation and within himself, but in Baur this type of man is able not only to recognize the presence of evil in creation—which includes himself—but also to fight it based on and through the good that is also to be found within the created realm.[27] For Baur, humanity is indeed conflicting, but the conflict between evil and good is somewhat dismissed in a rather optimistic fashion in the sense that, while it can naturally be observed and identified as such in nature, it can also be dealt with through man's innate powers to use good for the annihilation of evil.

Baur is keenly interested in detailing Böhme's concept of creation because he believes that what Böhme calls creation is nothing but a mixture as well as a penetration—or rather interpenetration—of the two principles, namely light and darkness. At the same time, one can see that this specific interaction between the two principles is in fact the active relationship between God and creation.[28] As far as Baur is concerned, there is in Böhme a constant struggle and a permanent war between the principle of light and the principle of darkness, in the sense that light attempts to "clarify" darkness (or light seeks) to make darkness clearer. At the same time, light tries to break through the rigidity of matter, but also to revive it and shape it in a spiritual way. In Baur's understanding of Böhme, light and darkness find themselves in a continuous and unending relationship; they evidently influence each other but the strongest influence is exerted by the principle of light.[29]

In religious and theological terms, God is stronger than creation, which means that God is stronger than Lucifer and all fallen angels—and all fallen human beings for that matter; in a word, God is able to overpower death itself. Nevertheless, there is a permanent interaction between death and God, which in Baur's understanding of Böhme can mean that light cannot be separated from darkness because they both define the reality of nature. Life and death, to take light and darkness to a more material level, are constants of the natural world and they must be treated as such, regardless whether one speaks of them in physical terms or in philosophical, religious, or theological concepts.[30] At this point, Baur notices that, according to Böhme, God's kingdom and the realm of hell are kept together like a body:[31]

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[27] In Baur, man's finitude (which is a mixture of good and evil) is capable of waging war against, as well as of obtaining a lasting victory over his own limits and, in doing so, he "touches" the infinitude of transcendence; in conclusion the good has the capacity to fight evil for the well-being of man. Baur reaches this particular conclusion based on his assessment of the Persian religion, which postulates a conflict between Ahura Mazda (which represents the infinite, the good, and light) and Ahriman (which represents finitude, evil, and darkness. Man gets involved in the battle, which ends with man's victory, pointing to his ability to step into the realm of infinity. See Gershon Greenberg, "*Religionswissenschaft* and Early Reform Jewish Thought: Samuel Hirsch and David Einhorn", 110–144, in Andreas Gotzmann and Christian Wiese (eds.), *Modern Judaism and Historical Consciousness. Identifies, Encounters, Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 122.

[28] See Owens, *Creative destruction*, 48.

[29] Compare Montgomery, *The Visionary D.H. Lawrence*, 173.

> Here thou seest once more, how the kingdom of God and the kingdom of hell hang one to another, as one body, and yet the one cannot comprehend the other. For the second birth, the heat, light, love, and the sound or tone, is hidden in the outermost, and makes the outward movable, so that the outward gathers itself together, and generates a body.[32]

In other words, there is an interwoven unity between the two principles, which presents us with a dualistic reality, which is the reality and the actuality of the world described in philosophical and religious terms. The world is both light and darkness, life and death, God and creation. The human being which lives in the world is, at the same time, life and darkness, life and death, divine and infernal. This is a clear indication that divinity has infernal qualities, while the inferno has divine features in the sense that their interpenetration is constant, mutual, and even natural.[33] Böhme's explanation—carefully highlighted by Baur—is based on the conviction that the earth has all the seven original spirits, so creation is evidently the result of God's activity and even the outpouring of God's being into a specific material shape. The inextricable connection between God and the devil is further confirmed by Böhme through the idea of incorporation. Thus, the inflaming of the devil presupposes the incorporation of both "the spirits of life" and the reality of death:[34]

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[30] More about life and death in Böhme can be read in Brown, *Life against Death*, 310.

[31] Böhme, *Aurora*, 21:107, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583.

[32] Behmen, "Aurora", 215.

[33] The key aspect here is the necessity that everything should stay as close to divinity as possible, because any distancing from divinity leads to luciferic, infernal, and hellish attitudes. See Jennifer D. Upton, *Dark Way to Paradise. Dante's* Inferno *in Light of the Spiritual Path* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), 59–60.

[34] Böhme, *Aurora*, 21:101, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583. Thus, following the incorporation of the spirits of life in the devil and death, the spirits of life are caught or trapped (*gefangen worden*), but not killed (*ermordet*, but in quoting Böhme, Baur wrongly writes *gemordet*).

> But thou art to know, that the earth has all the qualifying or fountain spirits. For through the devils's kindling, the spirits of life were incorporated or compacted together also in death, and, as it were, captivated, but not quite murdered.[35]

A similar image pointing to the incorporation of life death is the connection between light and fire, which was used by Böhme some paragraphs before:[36]

> And then the water becomes an anguishing sweat, which stands between death and life, and so the fire of the heat cannot kindle itself: for the unctuosity or fatness is captivated in the cold fire, and so the whole body remains a dark valley, which stands in an anguishing birth or geniture, and cannot comprehend or reach the life. For the life which stands inthe light cannot elevate itself in the hard, bitter, and astringent body, for it is captivated in the cold fire, but not quite dead.[37]

Life and death are one, so they describe the innermost dualistic feature of the human being, which is a life ending up in death.[38] In the devil, the spirits of life were imprisoned, but never put to death, so the negativity of humanity does not mean the end of humanity, but rather a constant feature which defines its very existence. For Böhme, the seven spirits of God can be found on earth, or in the very constitution of material creation, to the exact extent that they can be identified "in heaven", so this is another proof that in Böhme divinity and humanity are for ever interwoven. Life and death, light and darkness, divinity and humanity find themselves in a relationship which defines existence itself and particularly the existence of the human being.[39]

The earth is in God, which means that matter is in God, and as God never dies, it is very likely that matter will never die either. Baur's assertion of the permanence of matter in Böhme confirms his belief that humanity should be described in divine terms, which is the only way whereby a human being can be seen as superseding death itself. The reality of death, however, is natural in the sense that it cannot be detached from the reality of God's permanent existence since God is, in Baur, the idealized version of the human being. This is why he reverts to Böhme again, because he believes that death is connected with God's wrath, and—in religious terms—it is God's wrath which confines "king Lucifer" to the "house of death and darkness", but also to "eternal imprisonment":[40]

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[35] Behmen, "Aurora", 215.

[36] Böhme, *Aurora*, 21:95–96. The word Böhme uses here to convey the idea of death is *erstorben*, not *ermordet* or *gemorded*, as Baur put it.

[37] Behmen, "Aurora", 214.

[38] See also O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 223–224.

[39] Compare Weeks, *Boehme*, 180.

> (...) All the seven spirits of God are in the earth, and generate as they do in heaven: for the earth is in God, and God never died, but the outermost birth or geniture is dead, in which the wrath rests, and is reserved for king Lucifer, to be a house of death and of darkness, and to be an eternal prison or dungeon.[41]

In other words, God deals with Lucifer, sin, and evil, which is an indication that humanity—as represented by God in its idealized form—is able to deal with death the very same way. The reality of death, however, seems to be the only one which is truly capable of distancing humanity from God, most likely as proof that, in death, humanity is incapable of perceiving itself as divine.[42] According to Böhme, ultimate darkness is the house of God's wrath, in which the devil itself is said to live, so this house of God's wrath can be described as the house of death itself.[43] It is ultimately the house of death because God seems to die away in it. In other words, the importance of God slightly but surely decreases in the "house of death", as an indication that the reality of death means the cancellation of the human being's perception of itself as divine.[44] Divinity, however, is indeed a feature of humanity, so the dualism of spirit and matter is encapsulated in the human being's most evident characteristic: the body.

The Dualism of Matter and Spirit

The idea of "body" is important for Böhme because it speaks about the materiality of creation. As such, both angels and humans can be said to be material, in the sense that they both belong to the same creation.[45] At the same time, the concept of "body" can also be applied to the reality of life and death, as they both define the materiality of existence in God's created realm. The house of death, which Böhme describes as a "body", is therefore to be understood as a material reality since it is his conviction that the body of this "great house" is also the house of life.[46] As previously mentioned, life and death are inseparable and they both find their proper meaning through the idea of materiality. The house of death is concealed under the shell of darkness and this darkness is utterly incomprehensible, even inscrutable; this house nonetheless is ultimately the house of life wherein love and wrath fight each other.[47]

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[40] Böhme, *Aurora*, 21:72, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583.

[41] Behmen, "Aurora", 212.

[42] Thus, one could argue that, coupled with death, darkness is "non-divine". See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 77.

[43] See Arthur Versluis, "Christian Theosophic Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", 217–236, in van den Broek and Hanegraaff (eds.), *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, 219.

[44] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583.

There is an evident conflict between life and death, as well as between love and wrath, but this struggle is the very essence of creation.[48] There is no life without death and no love without wrath in the same way that there is no death without life and no wrath without love; at least this is the situation which defines the realm of God's created natural world. Baur's underlining of the complementarity between life and death on the one hand, and of love and wrath on the other reveals his undeterred conviction that Böhme promotes an essential religious-philosophical dualism which explains spirituality as materiality, while materiality is equally described through the idea of spirituality.[49]

Clearly this dualism is not perfectly balanced because life and love represent the positivity of creation, while death and wrath its negativity. In Böhme though—and this is noticed by Baur—positivity prevails over negativity, so life and love appear to be victorious over death and wrath, at least in spiritual terms. This is why he points out that love brakes through the house of death and produces "holy, heavenly branches in the big tree", which is positioned within the realm of light. The imagery of the tree discloses the fact that life grows from the soil which can represent the "house of death".[50] Love, as well as life, always has an upward direction, from below upwards or from the soil to the realm which exists beyond the soil, and which evidently is illuminated by light.[51] These branches, however, which are not said to represent anything specific—although they may symbolize the extent of love in the world—appear to grow also through the shell of darkness, very much as a branch grows through the bark of a tree. The result is that it finds “life with God”, so whatever life there is in the created world of nature can be said to find “life with God”, which can be an indication that, in Böhme, all natural life should be seen as positivity and ontological concreteness:[52]

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[45] There is, however, a distinction between the body of an angel and the body of a human being, because the former is made of spiritual matter, while the latter of physical matter. More about material and intangible bodies in Böhme can be found in Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 20.

[46] Compare Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 9.

[47] Böhme's opposition between love and wrath which leads to death, but also to the renewing of life produced a visible impression on Blake. See Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 72.

[48] See also Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism*, 108.

[49] It is crucial to underline here that, in Böhme, materiality and spirituality—man and God—are connected through the notion of corporeality. Both man and God have bodies, but while man's body is material, God's body is spiritual. See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 122–123.

[50] Doody, "The Gnostic *Clarissa*", 210–245, in Blewett (ed.), *Passion and Virtue*, 236.

> (...) The body of this great house, which lies hid under the shell or rind of darkness, incomprehensibly to darkness, that is the house of life, wherein love and wrath wrestle one with another. Now the love always breaks through the house of death, and generates holy heavenly twigs in the great tree, which twigs stand in the light. For they spring up through the shell or skin of darkness, as the twigs do through the shell or bark of the tree, and are one life with God.[53]

On the other hand, however, it is not only love which blossoms; wrath enjoys the same flourishing and it does so in the house of darkness. Darkness keeps some noble branches imprisoned in death, in the house of grimness “through its *Infizierung*”.[54] This may be Böhme’s way of expressing his conviction that the constant struggle between life and death is the most fundamental characteristic of existence in the world, so as they both define existence, they both can be said to blossom. Every created being goes through life and death, so the “infection” which characterized both life and death should be described as the inqualification, or the active movement of quality, which defines life and death. There is a constant movement, struggle, and opposition between life and death, but they are both part of existence in the world, so they cannot be separated in any possible way. The juxtaposition of life and death, as well as their unbreakable connection, is what Böhme calls the *summa* or the content of "the sidereal birth", a reference to the materiality of creation:[55]

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[51] See also Weeks, *Boehme*, 58–59.

[52] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:9–13, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583. Compare Ann B. Ulanov, *Picturing God* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 2002, first published 1986), 166.

[53] Behmen, “Aurora”, 239–240.

[54] Böhme’s idea of darkness and evil which penetrates creation, especially material creation, was highly influential in later theology and philosophy. See Hans-Martin Kirn, *Deutsche Spätaufklärung und Pietismus. Ihr Verhältnis im Rahmen kirchlich-bürgerlicher Reform bei Johann Ludwig Ewald, 1748–1822* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1998), 509, n. 416.

> And the wrath springs up also in the house of darkness, and holds many a noble twig captive in the death through its infection in the house of fierceness. And this is now the sum, or the contents of the astral birth or geniture (...) And now it may be asked: what are the stars? Or out of what are they come to be? They are the power of the seven spirits of God, for when the wrath of God was kindled by the devil in this world, then the whole house of this world in nature, or the outermost birth or geniture, was as it were benumbed or chilled in death, from whence the earth and stones are come to be. But when this hard dross or scum was driven together into a lump or heap, then the deep was cleared, but was very dark, for the light therein was dead in the wrath. But now the body of God, as to this world, could not remain in death, but God moved himself with his seven qualifying or fountain spirits to the birth or geniture.[56]

For Baur, Böhme's putting together of life and death as describing the essence of sidereal birth is obviously a dualistic attempt to present the reality of creation in terms which encompass the reality of the world as well as the reality which lies beyond the world, or the reality of God. In Böhme, the sidereal, essential birth of the stars as well as what he calls "the kingdom of elements"—most likely a reference to the natural components of the world or even to the forces which lie behind creation, namely God's power—are used to describe the created, finite world. This may be another indication that the world which we see around us and the world which we see from a distance make up one single reality which is described as obvious dualism. The world of humanity (or the earth) and the world of God (or the stars) belong to each other to the point that neither can be presented without the other.[57] The world as we know it is not only the result of the mixture and interpenetration of the two eternal principles, light and darkness, but also what Böhme calls "the third principle", which is described as "fragility".[58]

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[55] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:13–18, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583.

[56] Behmen, "Aurora", 240.

[57] This is because both worlds, man's and God's, share the same corporeality, the same body which is made of the seven spirits of God. See Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism*, 455.

[58] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:3, 16:4, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 583–584.

Since fragility is associated with the third principle, one can infer that this has something in common with the world.[59] In fact, Böhme points out that the third principle was devised by God to be revealed with the material world, so the concept of matter goes hand in hand with the idea of fragility which defines the third principle. The world, however, is the creation of God, so it is closely connected with the reality and the being of God, so the world points, at least to some degree, to the very being of God. This is perhaps why Böhme points out that God created angels and spirits in the paradisiac world, which is the other principle, but all these elements—God, angels, spirits, and the paradisiac world—reflect themselves in the third principle.[60]

In other words, what Böhme calls "the eternal birth", namely the essence of reality which includes God and creation, shares the features of the third principle. According to Böhme, the wisdom and almightiness of God—together with the eternal birth—have common aspects with the third principle and consequently with the idea of fragility. The result of this connection between God and creation, on the one hand, and the third principle and its corresponding idea of fragility, on the other, is not only interesting in Böhme, but also provocative for Baur. Since the created angels and spirits can mirror themselves not only in the eternal birth, but also in the wisdom and almightiness of God, it means that they can also set their imagination in the very heart of God, Böhme contents:[61]

> (...) God [created or] generated the third principle, that he might be manifested by the material world, he having created the angels and spirits in the second principle in the paradisical world, they could thereby understand the eternal birth in the third principle, also the wisdom and omnipotence of God, wherein they could behold themselves, and set their imagination merely upon the heart of God, in which form they could remain in the paradise, and continue to be angels (...).[62]

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[59] Böhme's interest in the material world is highlighted in Pádraig Ó Gormaile, "Dialogue with the Beyond. The Unknown God of Petru Dumitriu", 213–224, in Kamal Salhi, *Francophone Studies. Discourse and Identity* (Exeter: Elm Bank Publications, 2000), 216.

[60] The world and its fragility are connected with Lucifer in Böhme's larger picture of creation. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 149.

[61] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 5:16, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 584.

[62] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 36.

For Baur though this can imply that the reality of God, which encompasses the ideas of eternity, wisdom, and almightiness, needs to be redefined in terms of the third principle which includes the idea of fragility. In other words, fragility—which can also imply transitoriness—is a reality which defines not only the created word, but also the creator of the world. This also means that, in Baur, the idea of God, eternity, wisdom, and almightiness are not images of divinity—at least not of a supernatural God with an ontological status and objective reality of his own—but of the idealized human being which, despite being fragile and transitory, can still perceive itself in divine terms such as eternity, wisdom, and almightiness. In Böhme, the idea of God's heart not only speaks about God himself, but also about God's creation.[63] Thus, he shows that, on the one hand, God's heart points to the "paradisiac heaven" which exists "in the non-material heaven and birth", while on the other, it discloses the "light of suns".

In other words, God's heart is a device which portrays—in divine terms—both the idea of God, with its fundamental non-materiality, and the idea of creation, which is thoroughly material.[64] Böhme's explanation does not end here because God's heart also makes reference to the notions of eternal life and wisdom, as they are connected with God's eternal power. It is important to understand here that, in Böhme, God's eternal power, life, and wisdom reflect themselves in creation or, in "the light of suns" as he poetically explains, because the whole creation develops itself in "the silent matrix".[65] This can be a reference to the context of the whole creation, which is God, because Böhme also points out that creation develops through "the flowing spirit in the matrix". The matrix here seems to point to the creation's materiality, since the very matrix itself is to be understood in the broader context of the third principle, which is defined by fragility and transitoriness.[66]

It should be noticed here that Böhme's fragility and transitoriness translates through contingency in Baur, so it is not only creation which can be defined as contingent, but also God. This essential redefinition of God in Baur as an idea which defines the contingency of humanity is fundamental for his perspective on Gnosticism. Thus, in Baur, Böhme seems to be an adherent to Gnosticism because his discourse about God and humanity is characterized by the key reference to fragility, which not only describes humanity in divine terms, but also brings divinity to the level of humanity's contingency; in other words, the human being is a unique reality which perceives itself in a dualistic way, as divine and human, while being painfully aware of its inevitable end because of its constitutive fragility.[67]

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[63] See Sklar, *Blake's* Jerusalem *as Visionary Theatre*, 30.

[64] Compare Neil Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul*, 292.

[65] See also Meike Wagner and Wolf-Dieter Ernst, "Introduction", 9–25, in Meike Wagner and Wolf-Dieter Ernst (eds.), *Performing the Matrix. Mediating Cultural Performances* (München: Epodium, 2008), 13.

[66] Compare Edel, *Die individuelle Substanz bei Böhme und Leibniz*, 81–82.

Dualism Explained: The Idea of Fragility

The third principle therefore, which is the fragility, transitoriness, and contingency of the world, explains why Böhme places together the very concept of the third principle with the material world. In his thought, the third principle is not only defined by materiality, fragility, transitoriness, and contingency, but also by the idea of "beginning". The third principle is a reality which has a beginning, a starting point, an initial trigger which pushes its content towards self-development and eventually towards its very end. Consequently, for Böhme, the third principle not only has a beginning, but also an end, which defines its status. The third principle is, therefore, the material world which has a beginning and an end, because its very shape is fundamentally defined by materiality, and matter is contingent, transitory, and fragile in Böhme.[68] The constitution of the material world presupposes the beginning of matter and the end thereof, because Böhme points out that the third principle "goes into ether", and so vanishes into nothingness.[69]

As far as Böhme is concerned, the reality of the final deterioration of the material world is explained by the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which presents God as having laid the foundations of both the earth (the material world) and the heavens (the spiritual world). According to the text, they will both meet their end, despite God's existence, which is said to last forever. The end of the material world is expressed through the idea of "wearing out", which in turn explains Böhme's explanation of the third principle based on the notion of fragility:[70]

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[67] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 584.

[68] See Weeks, *Boehme*, 81–82.

[69] Compare Rudolf Steiner, *The Evolution of Consciousness as Revealed through Initiation Knowledge*, trans. V.E. Watkin, C. Davy, and P. Wehre (Forrest Row: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2006, first published 1926), 162–163.

[70] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 5:10, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 584.

> (…) As the spirit moved this matrix, so the matrix wrought, and in the kindling from the spirit of God in the fifth form of the matrix, the fiery heaven of the constellations did exist, which is mere *quinta essentia*, or quintessence, born in the fifth form of the matrix, in which place the light has its original, out of which at last the sun is born [or brought forth] wherewith the third principle becomes opened and manifested, which [sun] now is the life in the third principle, and the opener of the life of every life in the matrix, in this place, or *locus*, as the heart of God in paradise, in the immaterial heaven and birth, opens the eternal power of God, wherein the eternal life continually springs up, and wherein the eternal wisdom continually shines. Thus also the light of the sun (which is sprung up in the inanimate matrix) by the [flowing, hovering, or] moving spirit in the matrix, opens the third principle of this material world, which is the third and beginning principle, which as to this form takes an end, and returns into its ether in the end of this enumeration, as the Scripture witnesses.[71]

Thus, the material world is essentially transitory and contingent; it has a beginning and an end, but most importantly it is a reality which mirrors another. Böhme is aware that the third principle stays in close connection with the first two, because they reflect themselves in the third. Thus, light and darkness, God and creation reflect themselves in the idea of transitoriness, fragility, and contingency, which is an indication that the third principle somewhat becomes a hermeneutical key for the first two. Light and darkness, God and creation are essentially contingent in the sense that they both should be understood in terms which define *this* world, the material constitution of nature.[72]

Nevertheless, the material world cannot define itself without a reality which is said to exist beyond it, so Böhme writes that this world is the copy of the archetypal world; in other words, the material world is a representation of the spiritual world.[73] To push things even further, humanity is a copy of divinity, which exemplifies humanity's need to comprehend itself in divine terms. The third principle, which in Böhme defines the essence of the material world, is nothing but a similitude of the paradisiac world.[74] To be sure, the material world resembles the spiritual world, which—according to Böhme—remains hidden as the realm in which God revealed himself.

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[71] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 35.

[72] This world is the externalization of God, so God's light and darkness become "visible" in the body of creation. See Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 143.

[73] See also Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, 128.

[74] The material world, however, is degenerate by evil in comparison with the spiritual world. See Stuart Brown, "Renaissance Philosophy outside Italy", 70–103, in George H.R.

This is to say that God is to be understood as a spiritual reality which defines the material world. In other words, God has a meaningful existence only in the spiritual world where he reveals himself; this is why, in Böhme, the spiritual world of angels does not exist in this *locus*, or in the material world. The spiritual world is a different reality from the material world, so God gave another principle to this *locus*, or to the material world, and this principle is fragility, transitoriness, and contingency.[75] This means that, by contrast, the spiritual world is enduring, eternal, and necessary; it is therefore a reality which must define the material world in order to explain its fundamental dualism of light and darkness. According to Böhme, light and darkness have no meaning unless the concept of God explains the difference between them. God is associated with the idea of light and blissfulness, while the material world—defined as his creation—is better explained through the notion of darkness:[76]

> Yet the third principle is a similitude of the paradisical world, which is spiritual, and stands hid therein. And thus God manifested himself, and seeing the spiritual world of the angels in the place of this world continued not, therefore he gave another principle to this place, wherein a light springs up still, and where there is a pleasant refreshment, for the purpose of God must stand, and the first creatures must continue in darkness, rather [than that the purpose of God should fail].[77]

Light and darkness though are features of the material world, and they both explain its reality. God as light does not necessarily postulate the existence of an actual supernatural being; in Baur's understanding of Böhme it rather seems to be a way to define the spirituality of the material world. This world, the world of matter, is a reality which can be defined comprehensively by comparison with the spiritual world. The contemplation of the material world should lead to the understanding that the material world is the model for the heavens. In

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Parkinson (ed.), *The Renaissance and 17th Century Rationalism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 73–74.

[75] Compare van Meurs, "William Blake and His Gnostic Myths", 269–310, in van den Broek and Hanegraaff (eds.), *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, 289, and Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 211.

[76] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 8:4, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 584.

[77] Behmen, "The Third Principle", 49.

Böhme's words, "the stars mean the angels",[78] so the definition of the material world is in fact a dualistic attempt: first, the material world is the similitude of the spiritual world (as if the spiritual world is the reference point for the material world), and second, the material world is the model of the spiritual world (as if the material world is the reference point for the spiritual world). At the end of the day, it is this kind of reasoning that prompts Baur to see Böhme's religious philosophy as an attempt to consider the world in dualistic terms. Whatever exists is a reality which cannot be fully explained unless both light and darkness, God and creation, life and death, love and wrath, spirit and matter are brought together into one definition of humanity's unique existence.[79]

In Böhme, there is a representational correspondence between the spiritual world and its natural counterpart, in the sense that the latter reflects itself in the former, so they both share a set of common characteristics. What is important to notice at this point is Böhme's intention to read the spiritual world through the features and components of the natural realm. At the same time, it is essential to understand that this close correspondence between the two worlds, spiritual and natural, offers Baur the chance to read Böhme in a dualistic fashion to the point that Baur considers Böhme's presentation of the two worlds as one single reality which must be understood as an attempt by the human being to picture the natural world in spiritual colors.[80] To be more precise, Böhme believes that the stars must remain unchanged until the end of "this world"—a reference perhaps to creation in general—in the very same way angels must remain forever unaltered in "the eternal time of the heavens". This can mean that the spiritual understanding of the world will essentially remain the same for ever, although founding this conviction on the unchangeability of stars is probably not the best solution—at least not in the light of modern science which has proved that the universe is constantly changing because of its inner *Qual*, a perpetual movement of torment, drive, or urge.[81]

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[78] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:123, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 584.

[79] Given Böhme's close connection between the spiritual and the material world, but also between God and creation, it can be argued that he does not promote, but rather eliminates dualism. See, for details, Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, 157.

[80] The theme of the correspondence between the spiritual and the material world can also be found in Emanuel Swedenborg, one of Sweden's most famous modern mystics. See Czeslaw Milosz, *Emperor of the Earth. Modes of Eccentric Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, first published 1977), 126.

[81] There is something in matter which pushes it towards change; in this respect, it can be argued that Böhme's *Qual* is what causes matter to change permanently. See John

Then, Böhme underlines that the "*elementa*", which can refer to the elements which constitute the world, mean the "wonderful proportionality and changing of the shape of the heavens"; the idea of change here is again closely connected to the notion of unrest (*Qual*), which continuously moves within nature.[82] By the "shape of the heavens" Böhme refers to the "depth" between stars and the earth, namely to what the human being perceives to be the distance between the earth and the sky (most likely seen as a one-dimensional reality which "covers" the earth). This is why he writes that this "depth" between the earth and the sky changes its shape,[83] in the sense that sometimes it has a certain color, while other times it has a different color.[84]

Böhme is convinced therefore that the color spectrum of the "depth" ranges from blue to green and white, but it also changes its appearance in the sense that sometimes the "depth" is defined by clarity, while other times it is rather dim.[85] The "constitution" of the "depth" is another issue subject to change because what the human being can perceive as "filling" the gap between the earth and the sky varies from rain, to wind, and to snow.[86] All these changes describe the alterations which happen in the created world of nature, but this pattern also presents what occurs in the spiritual world. There is, therefore, a change of the heavens which occurs in conjunction with the ascension of the Spirit of God and which is different from the changes that happen in the world, although the pattern of change itself—or the reality of change—is a common element between the two worlds, natural and spiritual.[87] Böhme believes that the change of the heavens includes the alteration of colors and shapes, but it is a change which reflects the light of the Son that shines in them. To be sure,

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McLeish, *The Theory of Social Change. Four Views Considered* (London: Routledge, 2001, first published 1969), 2.

[82] Böhme's *Qual* (agony) becomes *Trieb* (urge) in Hegel. See Thomas J.J. Altizer, "Hegel and the Christian God", 71–91, in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59.1 (1991): 73.

[83] In addition to Böhme, the imagery of depth was used by Schelling, Heidegger, and Tillich. See Jean-Pierre van Noppen, "Language, Space, and Theography: The Case of *Height* vs. *Depth*", 679–690, in Martin Pütz and René Dirven (eds.), *The Construal of Space in Language and Thought* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter/Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 685.

[84] Read also Weeks, *Boehme*, 1–2.

[85] Böhme's view of colors influenced Jung's theory of colors. See Bruce R. Smith, *The Key of Green. Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 96.

[86] In Böhme, bad weather is the result of the first principle's "evil center". See Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult*, 20.

[87] The idea that change is able to alter both matter and spirit is also evident in Blake. See Sklar, *Blake's* Jerusalem *as Visionary Theatre*, 33.

there is change in the natural world and there is change in the spiritual world; the change in the natural world is different from the change in the spiritual world, but the reality of change affects both realms.[88]

Böhme though seems to be convinced that the pattern of change which happens in the spiritual world presupposes a "bigger/greater ascension in the birth", most likely a reference to the fact that the spiritual world takes precedence over the natural world, so the spiritual world is instrumental for the understanding of the natural world. This is why "God's wonderful wisdom" is incomprehensible, he concludes, so the deciphering of the realities of this world must rely on the understanding of the spiritual world.[89] Böhme resumes his idea that there is a correspondence between the spiritual and the natural worlds, because the earth means the heavenly nature, so the mundane reality must be understood in spiritual terms. This is why the seven spirits of nature, or the spirits which lie at the very foundation of creation represent not only the heavenly nature, but also the reality of the world.[90] Conversely, the reality of the world is explained by the seven spirits of nature which reflect themselves in the very constitution of creation. Consequently, as Böhme shows, the physical aspects of creation, as well as its forms and colors, find their origins in the seven spirits of creation:[91]

> Thus also is the change and alteration of heaven, into many several colors and forms, but not in such a manner and kind as in this world, but all according to the rising up of the spirits of God, and the light of the son of God shines therein eternally, but the rising up in the birth differs in the degrees more at one time than another. And therefore the wonderful wisdom of God is incomprehensible. The earth signifies or denotes the heavenly nature, or the seventh spirit of nature, in which the ideas, or images, forms and colors rise up.[92]

In other words, the physical world, creation in general, originates in the spiritual world and in this respect Böhme goes as far as to say that the birds, fish, and beasts of the world point to the various forms and shapes of heaven.[93] Such connection between nature and God, between materiality and spirituality, is explored in Böhme through the concept of birth.

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[88] Change is the process of becoming which modifies both material and spiritual realities. See Stephenson, *Veneration and Revolt*, 247, n. 17.

[89] See also Stevenson, *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime*, 90.

[90] For details, see Weeks, *Boehme*, 144.

[91] Böhme, *Aurora*, 12:123–126, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 585. See also Compare Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul*, 310.

[92] Behmen, "Aurora", 118.

Dualism Explained: The Idea of Birth

The idea of eternal birth has paramount importance for Böhme, who seems to understand it as the very essence of whatever exist in the universe, including the being of God himself.[94] This is why he writes that the eternal birth is characterized by a continuous progress in the material, visible, and comprehensible world. It should be pointed out that the eternal birth, which sets the entire physical realm in motion in such a way that a constant forward movement can be easily identified, is the reality which lies behind the actual being of God. In Böhme, God's being is born through the eternal birth which pushes the physical world ahead, in a movement of steady progress.[95] Ideas such as this one, which places the physical world and the spiritual world of God in one single reality that is produced by the eternal birth, supports Baur's later assessment according to which Böhme is a dualistic Gnostic since the physical and the spiritual worlds make up one, unified reality. At the same time, the reality which transforms the physical world on a daily basis, which Böhme calls "birth", must be continuous since it causes the "frozen body of the earth" to be born again and again.[96]

Thus, the physical world is being constantly born anew, so its transformation is continuous and progressive. It is essential to understand that, in Böhme, the physical world is a reality which cannot be detached from the spiritual world and vice versa. The spiritual world exists in an unbreakable, constant, and progressive relationship with the physical world, which confirms Böhme's understanding of God as a spiritual reality which defines the constitution of the physical realm. This is why he writes that this new birth, which pictures the continuous relationship between the spiritual and the physical worlds, can be performed without the devil's will; in other words, Böhme promotes a rather optimistic cosmology, as well as anthropology, in the sense that—despite the fall[97]—the evil of the world can somehow be avoided in the physical world through the spiritual realities of God's world.[98]

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[93] Behmen, "Aurora", 126–128, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 585.

[94] The idea of eternal birth particularly refers to God as Trinity. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 129.

[95] See also Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism*, 487.

[96] Continuance in this case is synonymous to progress, but progress can only be the result of conflicting realities such as spirit and matter, good and evil. See Richard C.S. Trahair, *Utopias and Utopians. An Historical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 42.

In order to underline the inextricable connection between God and creation, between the spiritual world and physical nature, Böhme explains that the Creator bore himself—in the sense that he decided to be born—in the body of this world. In addition to this, God's birth in the body of the world was performed "in his original spirits" and in a creaturely way. This is Böhme's way of explaining that the spiritual and the physical worlds are closely knit together, to the point that their actual existence is interwoven. There is no spiritual world without the physical world and there is no physical world without the spiritual world. To strengthen this conclusion, Böhme points out that the whole body of the physical world exists in the seven original spirits of God, which is a confirmation that the actuality of the physical world is totally dependent on the spiritual world, but also the other way around.[99] Böhme's conclusion that the spiritual world exists in a fundamental relationship with the physical world is cemented by his conviction that the three persons of the Godhead find themselves in a plenary birth "in this world"; in other words, the very essence of God—the idea of divinity itself with infinity and eternity as its fundamental characteristics—is to be seen as complete in the physical reality of the natural world:[100]

> (...) The creator has therefore in the body of this world generated himself, as it were creaturely, in his qualifying or fountain spirits, and all the stars are nothing else but God's powers, and the whole body of this world consists in the seven qualifying or fountain spirits. But that there are so many stars of so manifold different effects and operations, it is from the infinity, which is in the efficiency of the seven spirits of God, in one another, which generate themselves infinitely. But that the birth of the bodies of the stars do not change or alter in their seat, but do as they did

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[97] In Böhme, there is a direct connection between cosmology and man's fall; see David A. Harvey, "Beyond Enlightenment: Occultism, Politics, and Culture in France from the Old Regime to the *Fin-de-siècle*", 665–694, in *The Historian* 65.3 (2003): 671.

[98] For a contrary view, which asserts that evil cannot be avoided and there is no hope for the restoration of man's—as well as the world's—original perfection, see John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire. The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 16.

[99] More details about Böhme's seven original spirits of God, in Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 40–41.

[100] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:27–29, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 585.

> from eternity, it signifies that there shall be a constant continued birth or geniture, whereby the benumbed body of the earth should continually and constantly, in one uniform operation, which yet stands in the infinity, be kindled again, and generate itself anew (...).[101]

God, divinity, and spirituality can therefore be defined comprehensively only if they are presented in natural terms, or in a way which explains the natural reality of the physical realm. In Böhme, God can be explained only through his creation. Spirituality can be comprehended only through materiality. To reverse the whole reasoning, it is not God who causes the natural world to exist, but rather the natural world gives birth to God. Materiality produces spirituality, so it is the human being which causes the idea of God to exist. Nature, however, cannot exists without the idea of God, in the sense that humanity cannot fully comprehend itself without spirituality and the idea of divinity.[102] This is why nature finds itself in a state of "great yearning and anxiety" without the spirituality which brings God into its physical reality. The world needs to bear and work out a "stronger will", in the sense that it must always be willing to give birth to the divine power. It is as if God were somehow concealed in the world; this is perhaps why Böhme explains that God and Paradise stay hidden in divine power which is in turn hidden in nature.

It is therefore nature which produces the idea of God according to its constitution, power, and capacity. God cannot be explained without the reality of history and humanity, and this is because humanity itself is the constant reality which gives birth to the notions of God, divinity, and spirituality. This is why, in Böhme, the Trinity defines not so much God's being, but God's creation, the same way nature defines God, or matter defines the spirit:[103]

> (...) Are not all the three persons of the deity in the birth or geniture of meekness in this world? Yes, they are all three in this world in the full birth or geniture of love, meekness, holiness, and purity, and they are always generated in such a substance and being, as was done from eternity. (...) Thus there is a constant will to generate and work, and the whole nature stands in a great longing and anguish, willing continually to

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[101] Behmen, "Aurora", 241.

[102] In Böhme, the human being can only define itself properly through its connection with God's being. See, for details, Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, 230.

[103] Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:50, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 7:31, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 585–586.

> generate the divine virtue, God, and paradise being hidden therein, but it generates after its kind, according to its ability.[104]

God's creation though has a distinctive characteristic provided by the idea of Trinity; in other words, nature itself has a feature which makes it peculiar when compared with God's being seen as Trinity. Böhme discusses the issue of nature in close connection with the idea of God's being, so the materiality of nature is analyzed from the perspective of the immateriality of God's being. At the end of the day, humanity itself is studied through comparison with divinity. The feature which makes nature a distinctive reality is the fact that its unity reflects itself in a great diversity.[105] The idea of unity is derived from the notion of God's being; God represents unity at its best, but even the unitary being of God is—according to Böhme—in a state of constant and eternal birth, which implies the idea of movement although Böhme insists that God's being is immutable and changeless.[106]

God's being is then compared with man's soul, which means that divinity is faced with humanity, so Böhme's conviction about the immutability, as well as the reality of its constant movement, may be a reference to the fact that man's spirituality is a constant—though unchanging—presence in his existence. This is to say that man's spirituality is a dimension of the human being which cannot be excluded from man's individual and social life—and in this respect spirituality is constant; at the same time though, spirituality is changeless because—despite man's intellectual progress—spirituality is always about man's attempt to perceive himself in terms which transcend his natural existence to the point that he can comprehend himself from a divine perspective.[107]

Man's soul, which seems to be the *locus* for the perception of the idea of God's being in Böhme, produces thoughts under the influence of imagination, while thoughts produce the will and lust.[108] These two then result in work, and work is made substance in or by the will. So it is spirituality which gives birth to thoughts, the will, desire, and then work itself.[109] This is an important conclusion for Böhme since the entire existence of the human being seems to be shaped by its spirituality and especially by the notion of God's being.[110] Man has the capacity to use his mouth and hands in order to transform the "product" of the will into something "substantial". This whole process from the soul to the thought, the will, lust or desire, work, and then the "substantial" result is what Böhme calls "the eternal birth".[111] This entire mechanism defines the human being, but also God's being, in terms of creativity. God and man are pictured as beings who are capable of creating things of substance. Both God and man use their capacities in a way which defines them as creators. The image used here is that of the mouth which, Böhme says, utters the "*fiat*", and then the "*fiat*" produces "*materia*".[112] The word results in matter, and Böhme elevates here the power of the word to a status which allows the human being, but also God's being, to function as creators of material, substantial realities. The spirit works and develops in the power; when applied to God, this means that God's Spirit takes action according to God's power in creation.[113]

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[104] Behmen, "Aurora", 243.

[105] The diversity of nature is also analyzed by Schelling. See Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, 117.

[106] See also Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 27.

[107] Böhme was concerned to offer a perspective on Christian spirituality which insists on man's unity with God. See Kirschner, *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 134–135.

[108] See also O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 66.

[109] Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*, 78.

The spirit is the *centrum*, or the center, of multiplication in every aspect of the being, and this seems to be applicable both to God and man. The Spirit of God is the very core of God's capacity to multiply the things he creates; in the very same way, the spirit of man is the reality which enables the human being to produce a multiplicity of substantial things based on his capacity to understand.[114] Böhme connects the idea of the spirit with man's soul as well as with man's thoughts. Spirituality and rationality, therefore, appear to be the most fundamental features of the human being, which not only enables him to create things, but also to perceive himself as a creator of substantial, material things according to the pattern provided by the notion of God encrypted by Böhme in the phrase "eternal birth":[115]

> Thus also is the eternal birth, wherein the virtue [or power] is continually generated from eternity, and out of the virtue the light, and the light

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[110] It seems that Böhme's idea that man's existence is shaped by God's being exerted a powerful influence on Schelling who went as far as to postulate that man exists in God's being. See Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of Philosophers*, 99.

[111] Compare Edel, *Die individuelle Substanz bei Böhme und Leibnitz*, 82–83.

[112] See Versluis, *Restoring Paradise*, 70, and McCalla, *A Romantic Historiosophy*, 209.

[113] For instance, see Montgomery, *The Visionary D.H. Lawrence*, 210.

[114] See Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 61.

[115] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:35–36, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 586. Just a few paragraphs before, in 9:33, Böhme had decrypted the same phrase by writing that "the birth is the eternal Trinity" ("*die Geburt is die ewige Dreifaltigkeit*").

> causes and makes the virtue. And the light shines in the eternal darkness, and makes in the eternal mind the [desiring] and attracting will, so that the will in the darkness generates the thoughts, the lust, and the desiring, and the desiring is the *fiat*, and the *fiat* makes the *materia* [or matter,] and the spirit separates it, and forms it according to the thoughts.[116]

In Böhme, *fiat, materia*, and *centrum* are concepts which put together the reality of words and matter in a creative way which is confirmed by the juxtaposition of spirituality and rationality.[117] Words and matter would never be able to come together as one unique and creative reality unless man's rationality met the equally important dimension of spirituality, which allows him to understand his own existence and experience as having the capacity to create substantial, material things according to the pattern that exists within the idea of divinity. Nevertheless, putting words and matter together is no easy deal, but it becomes possible through what Böhme calls "agony".

Dualism Explained: The Idea of Agony

Since every thing which exists in the world has a *centrum* of multiplicity, or an essence which is able to produce something, Böhme asks what lies at the center of every thing and what exactly can be born out of this center.[118] Each birth, he points out, is characterized by "a spirit" and "agony", so it seems that things are produced in order to exist in the world according to "a spirit" and through "agony" or "pain".[119] Creation is essentially spiritual and painful in Böhme, but its spirituality appears to prevail over the idea of pain. Thus, as there is a spirit in every thing, one should also be aware that there is a will in anxiety, and desire in the will. Anxiety may well represent the state which triggers the will into action, while the will itself—once active—works through desire.[120] In other words, anxiety pushes the will to act and the will works based on desire. When it comes to desire, Böhme shows that it produces and upward movement because the will produces thoughts. To resume the order of creation, everything starts with anxiety, then the will is activated, and eventually thoughts emerge and thoughts are spoken by the mouth. According to Böhme, the mouth utters the *fiat* (or the word) based on power—God's power in religious terms. The *fiat*—once uttered—produces *materia*, which is formed by the spirit according to thoughts.[121]

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[116] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 63.

[117] Also check Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 148.

[118] In Böhme, the notion of center is connected with the idea of knowledge. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 28.

[119] See, for instance, Weeks, *Boehme*, 107, and O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 228.

[120] Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 89.

To put things into perspective again, the order of creation works like this: first, there is anxiety which provides us with the context for creation; second, anxiety activates the will; third, the will triggers thoughts or reason; fourth, reason causes the mouth to utter the *fiat* (or the word); fifth, the *fiat* (or the word) which is spoken by the mouth produces matter; and sixth, matter is shaped by the spirit in accordance with reason.[122] Consequently, in Böhme, the reality of creation is fundamentally spiritual and rational, and it is within this spiritual and rational context that the word is said to result in material or substantial things. When speaking of creation, Böhme has biblical imagery in mind since he speaks of God's wisdom as the foundation for the entire creation.[123] Since the spirit—or rather God's spirit in this context—is the one which shapes matter, Böhme notices that this is why there is such a wide range of creatures in the world. The variety of creatures in the world reveals the eternal rationality which exists in the wisdom of God.[124]

When it comes to God's eternal wisdom, Böhme points out that this provides God's spirit with the environment for the creation of species for all the creatures in the world. The spirit creates the variety of species which exists in the world, but the spirits acts according to the rationality of God's eternal wisdom. The *fiat* (or the word) is able to produce *essentia* (or substance) for the body of every creature based on God's rationality. This is possible because reason contains quality or, vice versa, quality is fundamentally connected with reason. Each thing or each created entity which exists in the world has an inner quality attached to its essence, because—according to Böhme—God's wisdom created it according to God's spirit and reason. Everything, however, is marked by fragility and transitoriness:[125]

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[121] See Kryder, *Sacred Ground to Sacred Space*, 296.

[122] Böhme's conviction that matter is shaped by the spirit seems to have influenced late German Idealism (Immanuel Hermann Fichter, Christian Hermann Weisse, and Friedrich Julius Stahl). See Andrej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom. The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 128.

[123] For an excellent discussion about God's wisdom and creation, see Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 43.

[124] Wisdom manifests itself in language, which builds a direct correspondence between words and things. See Stephen Prickett, *Narrative, Religion, and Science. Fundamentalism versus Irony, 1700–1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 46–47.

> (...) This is the birth (and also the first original) of all the creatures, and it standeth yet in such a birth in the essence, and after such a manner it is, out of the eternal thoughts (the Wisdom of God) by the *fiat*, brought out of the matrix, but being come forth out of the darkness, out of the out-birth, out of the center, (which yet was generated in the time, in the will), therefore it is not eternal, but corruptible [or transitory,] like a thought, and though it be indeed material, yet every source takes its own into itself again, and makes it to be nothing again, as it was before beginning.[126]

In other words, it is spirituality and rationality which attaches quality to the materiality of the world, which means that the world—or the notion of matter—cannot be explained fully and comprehensively without reference to ideas such as spirit and reason, which are connected by the power of the word. As far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's presentation of how creation works comes very close to the genuine teaching of creation promoted by Manichaeism and especially to its fundamental conviction that darkness desires—or rather agonizes for—the light.[127] Baur is convinced that, in Manichaeism, there is a powerful yearning which characterized darkness, which is constantly attracted to the reality of light, so the dualism between darkness and light—and especially the movement from darkness to light—is the reality which lies behind the "engine" of creation. Darkness and light also speak of evil and good, and it is important to notice that evil has the desire to come closer to the good; they are both, however, constitutive for the image of the world as can be perceived today.[128]

Böhme elaborates a little about the relationship between darkness and light, with the specification that it is darkness which craves for light. The connection between darkness and light is explained by means of the notion of "spirit"; the spirit cannot be detached from light, because the spirit appears to be within the light. It is in the spirit—and consequently in the existence of light itself—that the power of God, or rather divine power, appears to be revealed.[129] Darkness is totally unable to seize light, so it is also incapable of capturing the power of God, which means that—at least in Böhme—the superiority of light over darkness is a fundamental conviction. Given the incapacity of darkness to either seize the light or get the divine power, Böhme explains that darkness places itself in a position of antinomy toward both the light and God's power:[130]

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[125] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:36–37, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 586. It should be noticed here that Baur's quotations from Böhme is not exact. For instance, when speaking about the variety of animals, he writes "specter of creatures" (*Gespenste der Creaturen*) instead of "species of creatures" (*Geschlechte der Creaturen*). In the English traslation, *Geschlechte* is rendered as "birth".

[126] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 63.

[127] See Weeks, *Boehme*, 125.

[128] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 586.

> (…) God is the essence of essences, wherein are two essence in one, without end, and without original, the eternal light, that is, God or the good, and then the eternal darkness, that is, the source, and yet there would be no source in it if the light was not. The light causes that the darkness longs after [or is in anguish for] the light, and this anguish is the source of the wrath of God (or the hellish fire) wherein the devils dwell; from whence God also calls him an angry, zealous [or jealous] God.[131]

In other words, darkness rises against light and divine power with a "greater breath", which can indicate the darkness continuous and progressive attempts to conquer light and divine power. Böhme resumes an older idea at this point, namely the action of igniting the fire root "from the glare of God's light".[132] It is not very clear here whether darkness ignited the fire root based on God's light (instrumentally) or away from God's light (positionally), although both may be true. Böhme's discussion here is quite theoretical, but if one turned it into a practical application, then it would be easier to imagine Lucifer's attempt to ignite the fire root based on God's light—since he was himself made of God's spirits—and away from God's light—as he became the devil and thus was cast away from God.

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[129] See also Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 65–66.

[130] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:30. The antinomy between light and darkness in Böhme seems to be primarily internal because light and darkness should be perceived together "in a single image of God". Böhme's internal antinomy between light and darkness prompted Jung to articulate his theory about the "antinomy of the Self". See Aniela Jaffé, *Was C.G. Jung a Mystic? And Other Esssays* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 1989), 20.

[131] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 61–62.

[132] Cf. Weeks, *Boehme*, 145–146.

Böhme also mentions the third principle within the context of the antinomy between darkness and light, so the background for the appearance of the third principle is the fight between evil and God's power. The third principle, whose essence is fragility, temporality, and contingency, springs from the "dark matrix", which is the very *locus* in which the third principle originates.[133] There seems to be a reflection of the divine power in the origin of the third principle, the very same way that there is a reflection of the spirit in the light. In other words, there is a causal relationship between God's power and the third principle, in the sense that the "divine" God caused the "contingent, fragile, and temporal" creation to exist, but also between the "divine" spirit and light, which can indicate the fact that spirituality is the cause of the good.[134]

Thus, one can say that creation—and humanity by extension—is divine, but also that the good is essentially spiritual. It is very important for Böhme to establish that the notions of light and divine power have some sort of objective existence; they do exist in the reality of the natural world because darkness would not yearn for them unless they existed. As far as Böhme is concerned, there is a craving for light and divine power in the "dark eternity".[135] It is not crystal clear what Böhme means by dark eternity, but this seems to provide the context for the forces which seek to capture the light. The dark eternity is coupled with the bitter desire, which is said to be the "mother of eternity",[136] and the idea of nothingness, which is described as a "fierce hunger", characterized by aridity.[137] All these originate in a "coveting will", which is in constant pursuit of light and divine power. Thus, there is a coveting will, which triggers a fierce hunger that produces the bitter desire resulting in the dark eternity and nothingness, which attempts to grasp the light and divine power. Here is a passage in which Böhme explains these issues:[138]

> In the originality of darkness, there is harshness and austereness, this harshness causes that it be light, for harshness is desirousness, an attracting, and that is the first ground of the willing [or longing] after the light,

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[133] More about Böhme's dark matrix in Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 22.

[134] See, for details, O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 124.

[135] The same image—darkness lusting for light—can be seen in Schelling. See Gustavo Leyva, "The Polyhedron of Evil", 101–112, in María Pía Lara (ed.), *Rethinking Evil. Contemporary Perspectives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 107.

[136] See also Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 42.

[137] Compare Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 109, and O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 239.

[138] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:31.

> and yet it is not possible to comprehend it, and the attracting in the will is the [sting or] prickle, which the desiring attracts, and the first stirring [or moving]. Now the prickle cannot endure the attracting in the will, but resists, flies up, and yet cannot get away from thence, nor can endure the attracting, therefore there is a great anguish, a desiring [or longing] after the light (…).[139]

It seems that Böhme tries to establish a permanent connection between creation and God, or between materiality and spirituality, since the ideas of darkness, hunger, nothingness, and fierceness are associated with Lucifer and creation, while light and divine power point to God as creator. If so, the relationship between creation and its creator, or between materiality and spirituality is not only constant, but also permanent.[140]

This is why he explains that divine power manifests itself in every thing; divine power is not the thing in itself, but it reflects itself within the thing itself. The spirit of God can be seen, therefore, in "the other principle"—which can be either the second principle (evil and darkness) or the third principle (materiality and fragility). This is another proof that, in Böhme, creation should be understood in divine terms, because creation is the reflection of God's spirit, which can also be connected with the reality of what Böhme calls "the craving will",[141] the only force powerful enough to keep light and darkness in a continuous, uninterrupted, and perpetual relationship within the sphere of creation.

Light and Darkness in Creation

The moment of creation is crucial for Böhme since it marks the event which coupled darkness and light. In other words, darkness and light no longer exist as separate realities following the time of creation, because the agony which defines both darkness and light is now within the created realities of the natural world.[142] Darkness and light cannot be conceived without each other in

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[139] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 62.

[140] See Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 16–17, and Weeks, *Boehme*, 63–64.

[141] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 7:29, 12, 14, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 587.

[142] The theme of darkness which craves for light, so important to Böhme, can also be found in Berdyaev. See Richard Cándida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent. Art, Poetry, and Politics in California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 61.

Böhme and, although before the creation of the world they were distinct realities, following the time of creation they belong together in the natural and physical realities of the world:[143]

> This was the unsearchable purpose of God in his will, and therefore he thus created all things, and after this time, there will be nothing but only light and darkness, where the source [or property] remains in each of them, as it has been from eternity, where the one shall not comprehend the other, as it has also not been done from eternity.[144]

As far as Baur is concerned, the creation of the physical and material world represents both the separation and the interpenetration of the two principles, darkness and light. This is to say that within the physical world of nature, darkness and light can indeed be discerned as ethical realities, in the sense that evil and good are values which can be weighed by the human being. At the same time though, darkness and light are inextricably interwoven within the materiality of the world because good and evil are present not only within the inanimate world, but also within animated beings, human beings included.[145] Baur seems to be convinced that, in Böhme, the separation of the two principles of light and darkness is what happened in the beginning. The principle of light sought to distance itself gradually and progressively from the principle of darkness, so a separation of the two principles did occur, but the moment when this separation effectively took place appears to be, at least according to Baur, a time that can be placed before the creation of the world. Baur believes that the end cannot simply be compared with the beginning, which can mean that the initial separation of the two principles (the beginning) is different from the final combination of the same two principles (the end). In the material world, however, the two principles are actively interwoven and they bring to life both things and beings.[146]

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[143] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 9:40, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 589.

[144] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 63.

[145] In putting together darkness and light, Böhme intended to create an image of man which is characterized by unity and totality. See Detlef Ingo Lauf, *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 1977, first published 1975), 207.

[146] Böhme is convinced that, in the material world, the two principles of light and darkness can be reconciled in the element of fire. See, for details, Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 40.

In other words, the principle of light and the principle of darkness are able to bring to "concrete life" whatever exists in the material world, and the entities which form the physical reality of nature can never totally disappear. It has already been pointed out that, following the disintegration of their material constitution, the things and beings of the world continue to exist as shadows, so they existence is no longer effective, but rather figurative.[147] The reality of their existence, however, is beyond doubt, since the "form" of their existence (effective or figurative) appears to bear testimony to the continuance of their existence within the realm of spirituality, which evidently transcends their materiality. This is why Baur points to Böhme's conviction that all the things and beings which pertain to the third principles, namely all the things and beings which exist in the world and are characterized by fragility, temporality, and contingency, will stay in the first matrix forever.

It has been underlined that, in Böhme, the matrix represents both materiality and darkness, so the things and beings of the world are said to remain continuously within this matrix; in other words, they will forever be characterized by materiality and darkness.[148] Man, for instance, will stay for good within the matrix of darkness and materiality although he managed to produce the birth of the other principle—namely of light—so he is born again in the principle of light. Man originates in the paradisiac world of the heavens, according to Böhme, but despite his origins, man will stay forever in the matrix since the light within his being exists in a relationship of interpenetration with the principle of darkness, and this is why man will not only remain in the matrix for ever, but he will also be unable to reach God's light again:[149]

> And then all in this third principle remains again in the first matrix, only that which has been sown in this principle, and that has its original out of paradise, out of heaven, and out of the second principle [man], that continues eternally in the matrix. And if he has in this [life's] time attained the second principle, so that he is born therein, it is well with him, but if he has not, then he shall remain still eternally in the matrix, yet not reach the light of God.[150]

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[147] The distinction between the materiality of things and their theoretical image as shadows is also present in Hegel. See Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers*, 116.

[148] Since darkness is a feature of God in Böhme, the matrix is the means whereby God objectifies himself in creation. See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 133.

[149] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 5:11, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 589.

[150] Behmen, "The Third Principle", 35.

Böhme's explanation may seem confusing, but he does attempt to distinguish between the principles of light and darkness in a way which makes sense of man's existence in the world. What Böhme wants to do here—and Baur appears to approve—is make sure that man's existence is comprehensively explained as a mixture of darkness and light within a world which is defined by materiality, fragility, temporality, and contingency, despite man's inner spirituality that allows him to perceive himself in divine terms.[151]

Given Böhme's discussion about the matrix, the human being, and the interpenetration of the two principles of light and darkness, Baur correctly concludes that Böhme's system is based on the belief that there are three levels of reality corresponding to three worlds: the paradisiac world, Lucifer's world, and the material world. As mentioned before, these three worlds are in fact levels of reality because, as Baur points out, the two principles of light and darkness not only exist in each of them, but they also work together. This is why Baur insists that one should think about the two principles as active in all three worlds; at the same time, it should be stressed that one principle cannot exist without the other, nor can it work without the other. In other words, light and darkness exist and work together in God's world, in Lucifer's world, and in man's world.[152] The immediate implication is that both uncreated and created realities host within themselves the reality of darkness which, as explained before, yearns for the opposite reality of light.[153] The dualism is evident here, and this shows why Baur chose to highlight this aspect of Böhme's thought. Another implication is the recognition of the fact that God is defined both as light and darkness when it comes to his innermost essence as the maker of creation. God is evidently spiritual and his world is equally spiritual in nature, but so is Lucifer's although it is created, not uncreated as God's realm. The only creation that is not spiritual is man's world, which is material; nevertheless, it cannot be fully comprehended without the spirituality of both the created world of Lucifer and the uncreated world of God.[154]

At the end of the day, all three worlds are fundamentally defined by spirituality, since the principles of light and darkness are active and working together in all of them. Concerning the presence and activity of light and darkness in the three worlds, Baur points out that the difference between them resides in the degree of prevalence of one principle over the other in each of the three worlds envisioned by Böhme.[155] This means that one principle is dominant over the other one in each of the three worlds, and this is what constitutes the reality which individualizes each world. To be sure, Baur stresses that in the paradisiac world of God, it is the second principle—namely light and love—which prevails over the first principle of darkness; to be clear, the first principle of darkness is totally subordinate to the second principle of light. One way in which Böhme explains the prevalence of light over darkness, but also the success of darkness in affecting man, is to resort to the notion of Holy Spirit as a representative of the light which is capable of dealing with darkness:[156]

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[151] Compare Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 66.

[152] The whole reality is about restoring the disrupted balance between good and evil, light and darkness. See Kirschner, *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 140–141.

[153] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 40.

[154] At the same time, Böhme insists on the uncreated character of God's being and wisdom. See Stevenson, *Romanticism and the Androgynous Sublime*, 90.

> Therefore also the spirit which goes forth in the soft matrix is the holy ghost, and God dwells in himself, and he calls himself an angry, zealous [or jealous] God, only according to the most original matrix, which is not manifested in paradise, and in the beginning also it was forbidden to man, to eat of the fruit [of] good and evil, from the most original matrix. Neither should man have known this most original matrix, if he had not imagined [thought or longed] after it, and eaten of the fruit thereof, whereby the matrix presently took hold of him, captivated him, [acts or] qualifies in him, nourishes and also drives him (…).[157]

It is interesting to notice here that, as far as Baur is concerned, the first principle is darkness and hate,[158] while only the second is light and love.[159] This may be the result of his practical understanding of religion, which comes from the observation of the material world, where the principle of darkness seems to be the first, while light is the second.[160] At any rate, in the material world both principles work with what Baur calls a "changing prevalence", which means that the domination of each principle over the other is interchangeable. In other words, at one time the principle of darkness and hate is prevalent, while other times the principle of light and love gets the upper hand. In Lucifer's world, therefore, the prevalence of the first principle, that of darkness and hate, is evident as Baur shows that darkness is most decisive within the reality of Lucifer's realm.[161]

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[155] See also John Macquarrie, *Two Worlds Are Ours. An Introduction to Christian Mysticism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 179–180.

[156] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 5:14.

[157] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 35.

[158] Baur seems to follow Böhme in connecting the first principle with evil, although evil is deciphered through the idea of God's wrath. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 52.

[159] Again, Baur follows Böhme in seeing the second principle through love and light. See Dourley, *Paul Tillich, Carl Jung, and the Recovery of Religion*, 66–67.

[160] This indicates that, in Böhme, the material world is characterized by "relative darkness". See Feuerstein, *Lucid Waking*, 76.

This is how Baur understands Böhme's system, but when it comes to formulating his own perspective on reality, it appears that for Baur the material world is the only objective reality; God's paradisiac world and Lucifer's diabolic world are only projections of man's inner spirituality,[162] which explain the reality of the material world as well as that of the human being's existence in the world as both physical and non-physical, namely material and spiritual. The main point of Baur's presentation is neither God, nor Lucifer, but man who perceives his surrounding reality in a way which accounts for both what is visible and for what man believes to be invisible within it. In this context, materiality stands for what is visible, while immateriality or spirituality for what is invisible and, at the same time, materiality may point to what is objectively real in the world, while spirituality may be a reflection of what man expects to be ideal—if not *in* the world, then at least in his ideal picture of the world.[163]

As far as Baur is concerned, Böhme's three worlds stand only in an external relationship to each other. Although it is not very clear what he means by this external relationship, he does point out that it is not evident why the second principle—which is light and love—rules in the first world, namely in the paradisiac world of God. In other words, according to Baur, God's world should be influenced to a higher degree not only by the principle of light and love, but also by the principle of darkness and hate, and this can be because of his conviction that reality is exclusively the realm of material nature, which is also the context for the existence of the human being. If this is true, and the principle of light must be somehow counterbalanced by the principle of darkness—which is in fact the case in the material world—then it seems to be quite clear why Baur warns that Böhme's three worlds must be understood as different standpoints.[164]

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[161] For an interesting parallel with Goethe's perspective on Lucifer's world, see Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, 51.

[162] For a contemporary view which supports Baur's view of Lucifer as projection of man's spirituality, see Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 45.

[163] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 589–590.

[164] God's world is not above man's world or, to include good and evil in the picture, God's good world is not above man's evil world. The two worlds are only different points of view, in the sense that one can only speak about the good which is above evil or, to be more

In other words, the three worlds should not be necessarily treated as objective realities which have an ontological existence of their own, but rather as a means whereby Böhme intended to convey the relationship between God and the world—most likely the material world—which, for Baur, is an attempt to define the connection between infinitude and finitude or between the ideal and the real. To be sure, the idea of God is associated with the ideal, while the reality of the world represents the actual.[165] Things, however, get a little bit more complicated as Baur defines the paradisiac world of God as the identity of the world with God, which means that the opposition between God and the world is cancelled in God's world. It is evident therefore that, in Baur, the world of God is not an external reality to the world of humanity. The world of God and the world of humanity are one single reality, but—when one speaks about the world of God—we should understand that the phrase is intended to point to the world of humanity in a "paradisiac" state, namely without the opposition between God and man or without the domination of the first principle of darkness and hate over the second principle of light and love.[166]

In other words, the paradisiac world of God is nothing but the material world of men in a perfect state, wherein darkness and hate is subordinate to light and love. Lucifer's world is also a phrase which is meant to describe the material world of humanity, but in this case the first principle of darkness and hate is dominant. Thus, in Baur, the world of Lucifer represents the opposition and conflict between God and man to its full extent and with its fundamental divisiveness described by Böhme.[167] This is to say that Lucifer's world is man's world as characterized by the domination of darkness, hate, and evil which bring divisiveness, opposition, and conflict. The third world is the material world of humanity which—from the standpoint of the idea of the "spirit" present in all three worlds or perspectives on the material world—is said to be the return of the spirit from "this divisiveness" that characterizes Lucifer's world, so it is the liberation of the second principle—light and love—from the

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precise, moving from evil to doing the good can be described as "God's world". See, for details, Weeks, *Boehme*, 114.

[165] This is why going from the real to the ideal is vital for Böhme's thought because the human being must pursue its ideal or original state. The darkness in the human being covets for the light of man's original "image". See also Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 23.

[166] This is also Böhme's pattern, according to which man is in God and God in man. See Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers*, 220.

[167] One of Lucifer's features is the ability to cause division. See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 221.

bondage in which it was kept by the first principle—darkness and hate—most likely in Lucifer's world.[168]

What Baur appears to be saying here—based on Böhme's system—is that humanity must not be driven by the conflict between God and man or by the divisiveness which is produced by the conflict between God and man "in Lucifer's world". Humanity should never be willing to remain "in Lucifer's world" or in a state which is dominated by darkness and hate. What humanity should do is embrace its materiality and understand that the conflict between God and man produces darkness and hate, so this should be understood as liberation of the spirit from the bondage of darkness and hate.[169] The conflict between God and man, or between the ideal and the actual, cannot be cancelled; in fact it should not be accepted as a "cancelled" principle, but rather as a "canceling" principle "in this time" or in the material world. Humanity must understand that the opposition between God and man is the conflict between the ideal and the real, and this is effectively working within the material world through the "fragmentation of forms", which points to the fact that the spirit is in conflict with itself.[170]

Thus, humanity is in conflict with itself, which can explain Böhme's attempt to present the material world as characterized by fragility, temporality, and contingency. To conclude, for Baur, Böhme's three worlds represent three standpoints which describe attitudes that can be found in the reality of the material world. The three worlds stand for the conflict which exists between man's perception of reality and his idealistic representations thereof, by means of concepts such as God, Lucifer, and the spirit.[171] This conflict, however, can be dealt with; and the solution for the conflict, according to Böhme, cannot be detached from the notion of Christ.

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[168] For details about the liberation of the second principle in Böhme, see O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, 77.

[169] Liberation can take many forms, one of which is the return to the primal matrix, which cancels the distinction between transcendence and immanence, good and evil, etc. See also Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology. Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 176.

[170] This can mean that, in Böhme, inward spirituality is more important than external manifestations. See Versluis, *Theosophia*, 91.

[171] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 590.

Christ and Lucifer in Creation

According to Baur, the principle which, in Böhme, is capable of abolishing the opposition or the conflict between God and man in time, or within history, is Christ.[172] The definition of Christ in Böhme seems to be quite traditional, because—although no quotation from Böhme is given—Baur writes that Christ is seen as the Son of God who became man. Thus, the incarnate Son of God, who is Christ, is somewhat superior to Lucifer and his world, because Christ is said to be the ruler of the future world, while Lucifer is the ruler of the present world.[173] What seems to be important at this point is the fact that, for Baur, Böhme's presentation of Christ as superior to Lucifer is not the aspect which counts, but rather idea that both Lucifer and Christ represent concepts describing humanity. Regardless of whether humanity lives in the present or in the future, Lucifer and Christ are presented as images which speak of humanity in its present and future states. It can be argued that Böhme may have thought of Christ as being superior to Lucifer in the sense that Christ as a divine being was superior to Lucifer as a created being; in Baur though, the quality of being and the ontological status of Lucifer and Christ as beings seems to be unimportant. They appear to function therefore as concepts which define different states of humanity in the world.[174]

In other words, both Christ and Lucifer speak of humanity and its existence in the world, not necessarily of God and its relationship with humanity in the world. This is why Baur mentions that the opposition between God and man should be conceived as canceling in Christ and Lucifer, most likely in the sense that there is no distinction between God and man given that Christ and Lucifer no longer point to supernatural beings, but to images which represent various states of humanity. Baur also shows that the cancellation of the opposition between God and man within the temporal development or within the chronology of history is possible only regarding Christ and Lucifer, so the opposition between God and man becomes cancelled within itself.[175] The very moment when Lucifer fell, his place was left to be occupied by the Son of God, which can indicate that the darkness of humanity can be replaced by the light of God's Son. Since neither Lucifer nor Christ are supernatural beings, but different states of humanity, Baur's thesis may translate a conviction which states that the present state of humanity—dominated by hate and darkness—can be replaced, in the future, by a state of progress that is characterized by love and light.[176]

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[172] For a brief but informative assessment of Böhme's view of Christ, see O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 431, n. 86.

[173] Following the same pattern, Adam is superior to fallen angels, because while angels succumbed to darkness forever, Adam is capable of grasping the manifestation of God. See Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 144.

[174] See also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 140–142.

[175] Baur seems to push Böhme's theory a little too far because while Baur believes that the cancellation of the opposition between God and man is beneficial, Böhme sees the very opposition between God and man as profitable for the revelation of the self (God's and man's). See Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 138.

For Baur, the postulation of Lucifer and Christ as states of humanity begins to look like what he calls an "absolute dualism" although this specific dualism is only apparent since both principles, light and darkness—expressed by means of Christ and Lucifer—are placed in God. This is what Baur defines as "disproportion" because what seems to be an absolute dualism between light and darkness through the images of Christ and Lucifer is the sum of two images which are not independent but rather encapsulated within the broader concept of God. This can be a reference to the fact that the concept of God represents the spirituality of humanity, which explains the reality of light and darkness or good and evil within the existence of the human being in the history of the material world. The human being appears to be thoroughly spiritual since its good as well as its bad manifestations are depicted by means of ideas such as Christ and Lucifer, good and evil.[177] Human beings, however, are not good and evil in the sense that some are good and others are evil. As far as Baur is concerned, the reality of good and evil can be found in all human beings, and the fact that the two principles of light and darkness are fundamental to each human being is explained through the inclusion of Christ and Lucifer—as representing light and darkness, as well as good and evil—in the the broader notion of God, which contains both principles within one, single spiritual reality.[178]

Baur is convinced that Böhme's perspective on man resembles the ideas promoted by of Gnosticism and Manichaeism, in the sense that man is seen as microcosm.[179] Man, however, is not just a microcosm; he is also what Baur calls

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[176] Böhme's view of history is less optimistic than Baur's. Thus, while Baur believes in an ascending progress of humanity towards love, light, and goodness, Böhme seems convinced that the pattern of history is circular as well as informed by "an eternal pattern", which rules out Baur's idea of progress. See Weeks, *Boehme*, 82.

[177] The combination of good and evil in man's innermost constitution must have triggered Baur's interest in Böhme as a representative of modern Gnosticism. See van Oort (ed.), *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica*, 172.

[178] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 590–591.

[179] See also Hessayon, *"Gold Tried in the Fire"*, 288.

"the light transparent center",[180] and he points out that this is the way man should be understood both in Böhme, on the one hand, and in Gnosticism and Manichaeism. This presentation of man, which characterizes him not only as a center, but also as light and transparency, appears to be crucial for Böhme since the feature of transparency implies the transmission of light. In other words, man is the center which not only has light—because man himself is said to be light—but also transmits light. At any rate, according to Baur, man is in his capacity as a center of light and transparency the *locus* where the "great battle of principles" has its innermost and its most intensive significance.[181]

Thus, the opposition between light and darkness can be explained and the meaning thereof can be deciphered by looking at man as the context for the contrast between good and evil. Should there be any meaning whatsoever attached to the conflict between good and evil, that can be made sense of by understanding the human being as the center which contains not only light and darkness, but also the opposition between the two as manifested through the reality of good and evil.[182] This situation though is valid for humanity in general as well as for every human being in particular. Good and evil is a reality which characterizes not only humanity as a race, but also human persons as individuals, and the conflict between good and evil is a constant reality in both cases. It is interesting, however, to see how Baur understands Böhme's perspective on humanity as being related to Lucifer's fall. In fact, Baur alleges that, in Böhme, the creation of man can be accounted for through Lucifer's fall, in the sense that humanity was needed following Lucifer's decision to fight against God.[183]

In other words, man was meant to be some sort of compensation for Lucifer's fall; thus, the creation of humanity was intended to be for the kingdom of light in order to substitute the fall of the spirits which ended up in the kingdom of darkness. What seems to be curious in Baur's whole explanation of Böhme's understanding of man as being created to be a compensation for Lucifer's fall has to do with the fact that, following the actual fall of Lucifer and all the spirits which adhered to his decision, man was created by God as a being with a body.[184] Since the body presupposes the idea of matter and matter is by definition limited, the creation of humanity as subject to further limitations could not have provided God with an actual compensation for Lucifer's fall. The fact is that perhaps the compensation provided by the creation of humanity was never intended to be perfect; it may be that God intended to provide Lucifer with a realm of himself, while a new creation was intended only to replace the previous—Lucifer and his angelic hosts—not to constitute a perfect substitute.[185] It is also important to notice that God did not destroy the old creation following Lucifer's fall; what God did was to incorporate the reality of Lucifer's rebellion and evil within the sphere of his divine control.

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[180] In Böhme, man is not only a microcosm, but also a *microtheos*. See Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, 542–543.

[181] See also Pagel, *Paracelsus*, 206–207, n. 6.

[182] Compare Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 23.

[183] See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 304.

[184] For details, see Fischer, *Converse in the Spirit*, 182.

Otherwise said, God did not act against Lucifer in the sense that he could have destroyed him and his realm; on the contrary, God provided Lucifer with a realm in which he could be the ruler despite his rebellion against God and the evil which came with it.[186] It is as if God had "protected" evil, not in the sense that he favored it, but he did confine it to its own reality in a world where the principle of darkness prevailed over the principle of light. This is why Baur seems to capture another expression of dualism in Böhme, since God—who is essentially defined by the principle of light and love, and his world is characterized by the same—allowed the opposite reality of both himself and his world to exist in a restricted realm which nurtured the predominance of the principle of darkness and hate. The dualism is not absolute, since God has always had an upper hand over Lucifer's world, but the simultaneous existence of the two realms and of the two principles explains why the reality of good and evil is permanent in the third world (the material world of humanity), which was intended to compensate for the corruption of the second (the spiritual world of Lucifer).[187] The truth is that the third world is a combination of the first two and, although good and evil, light and light, love and hate seem to be realities in all three worlds—with the understanding that light dominates the first and darkness the second—it is in the third world that darkness and light fight in a constant way which allows each to prevail over the other.[188]

In Böhme—and this is perhaps why Baur chose him in order to include his writings amongst the Gnostic productions of Christianity—God's actions towards the devil do not seem to have a thoroughly negative connotation; on the contrary, God is depicted as being somehow protective of the devil in the sense that the element of willingness and intentionality towards the punishment of Lucifer's actions appears to be lacking. In other words, Böhme points out that God did not inflame himself in his external birth of nature against the rebellious action of Lucifer. This seems to imply that God did not activate his intentional will; it was not this particular will that God wanted to inflame or ignite, so he did not unleash his wrath against the devil—and Böhme highlights this aspect by insisting that God did not do this. What God did in turn was to concentrate his saltpeter, which can mean that he decided to restrict his actions against the devil in a negative way.[189] He did act towards the devil but in doing so, God provided the devil with a dwelling place for himself and his hosts of rebellious angels. Böhme seems to be convinced that the devil cannot simply be thrown into another kingdom of angels—maybe because there is not one or rather there is not another one; the kingdom of angels has already been created and God did not plan to create an alternate realm for angels. The devil, however, needed a place to dwell—a *locus*, as Böhme says—and this indicates that the reality of evil cannot be totally separated from the reality of good. Darkness cannot be kept away from light, and neither can hate be separated from love, should we use all the connotations which accompany Böhme's two principles.[190]

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[185] See also Cohn-Sherbok and Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, 139.

[186] According to Böhme, there is a *locus* for everything in creation, including Lucifer and evil. See Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 175–176.

[187] Compare Weeks, *Boehme*, 115.

[188] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 591.

The inflamed saltpeter was not meant to be given an eternal dwelling place straight away; this is why the internal birth of the spirits remained hidden in the inflamed saltpeter. Although the text is quite obscure, it appears that what Böhme wants to convey at this point is the fact that the devil's actions were confined to the world in which he was meant to dwell in the first place.[191] Consequently, the perspective of having another realm created to compensate for the corrupted and rebellious world of angels became a real possibility. Such an action of God would not only imply the actual creation of another realm and a corresponding population—which Böhme calls "army"—but also the permanent seclusion of the devil within his own realm.[192] Thus, God's world—the initial, paradisiac realm—was followed by Lucifer's world of angels, but once this became corrupted, the necessity of having another world created as a compensation for the corruption of the angelic realm is seen by Böhme as the logical step to take as far as God was concerned. Consequently, God is said to have acted in this respect by keeping king Lucifer confined to his own world; in other words, Lucifer was kept prisoner within the world God had created for him until a new creation was devised in order to replace the corrupted one. As far as Böhme is concerned, a new army of angels was meant to be created instead of Lucifer's, and this new army had to be created from the same saltpeter, namely the one which was already inflamed. The result, so clear this time in Böhme, was the material world of humanity, so men and women are meant to replace Lucifer's cohorts of corrupted angels:[193]

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[189] Read also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303.

[190] See also Stephen D. Cox, *Love and Logic. The Evolution of Blake's Thought* (Ann Harbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 69.

[191] For more details about Böhme's perspective on Lucifer's dwelling place, see Rossbach, *Gnostic Wars*, 144.

[192] See Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Volume 2, 166.

> For when God was angry in his outermost birth or geniture in nature, then it was not his purposed determinate will to be kindled, neither has he effected that kindling. But he has drawn the *Salitter* together, and thereby has prepared an eternal lodging for the devil. For he cannot be expelled quite out, away, beyond, God, into another kingdom of angels, but a place must be reserved to him for a habitation. Neither would God presently give him the kindled *Salitter* for an eternal habitation, for the internal birth or geniture of the spirits stood yet hidden therein. For God intended to do somewhat else with it, and so king Lucifer should be kept a prisoner till another angelical host or army, out of the same *Salitter*, should come to his stead, which are men.[194]

This is to say that the prevalence of evil was meant to be appeased by the creation of a world in which evil will be countered by the reality of goodness. The domination of evil in Lucifer's world is evident,[195] so the only way to put an end to the reign of evil was a new creation, and this creation seems to be the only possibility for quenching the inflaming of evil by pushing good forward against it. The realm of humanity is both good and evil—and this is because it was created from the same inflamed saltpeter—but the presence of good within it could offer at least some sort of means to reduce the actions and consequences of evil. Humanity was created from Lucifer's place—from Lucifer's *locus*, as Böhme points out—and this explains the mixture between good and evil with the material reality of nature.[196] This world, the material world, is bad because the ignited saltpeter of Lucifer's dwelling place was used for its creation; at the same time though it is good because it was created by God himself, and it includes humanity, which in Böhme is the other army, the army which God created to compensate and replace Lucifer's outcast army of fallen angels:[197]

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[193] Böhme, *Aurora*, 16:74–75, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 591.

[194] Behmen, "Aurora", 164.

[195] A key observation is needed at this point: Lucifer dominates his world, not the entire cosmos, which turns him into a "kind of Gnostic demiurge". See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 142.

[196] It is important to notice here that creation actualizes evil. See Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers*, 62.

> (…) the beasts, fowls, and all vegetations or growths in this world, all these were created before man was created, who is and signifies the second host or army, which God created instead of expelled Lucifer, out of the place of Lucifer.[198]

Whatever God created was done through the action of the word—closely associated with the idea of God's Son—which is of paramount importance for Böhme as Baur correctly notices.

The Word and the Son in Creation

The power of the word—the eternal word—is considerable in Böhme, because it not only is the reality which informs humanity about its creation, but also the one which discloses the source of the "eternal birth".[199] To be sure, the word speaks about both the creation of man and the creation of the entire universe. The word is at the same time the revealer of how all creatures appeared in the material world and the power which explains how the state of grimness rose against gentleness:[200]

> (…) The eternal world in the eternal light knew very well, that if it came to manifest the fountain of the eternal birth, that then every form should break forth; yet it was not the will of the love in the word of the light, that the forms of the tart [sour, strong wrath] should elevate themselves above the meekness, but it had such a mighty [or potent] form, that it is so came to pass.[201]

Most importantly, the word is the discloser of man's state following his fall, which sheds light on his situation in the material world. In his fallen state, man is no longer an exclusive spiritual being; this is why Böhme points out that his life birth—most likely a reference to his existence in the material world—is now characterized by the third principle. This means that man's entire life is fragile, temporal, contingent, and finite. Man now stands in the kingdom of stars and elements, so he is wholly material and physical.[202] According to Böhme, man's life after the fall should be seen as being informed and nurtured by the power of materiality; this is why he writes that man must now eat from the fruit of the kingdom of stars and elements. Consequently, nature is perfectly capable of protecting and nurturing the human being.[203]

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[197] Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:62, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 591.

[198] Behmen, "Aurora", 141.

[199] See also Vassányi, *Anima Mundi*, 134.

[200] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 11:22, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 596.

[201] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 78.

At the same time, he must live under the power of the same kingdom; thus, man is material and physical, his food is material and physical, and his life is material and physical. Despite acquiring physicality and materiality, man's spiritual side did not vanish entirely.[204] His spirituality became powerless in relation to God, but Böhme is careful to point out that the other reality—the devil's opposing spirituality—is the one which now, after the fall, directs and supplies man's nonmaterial constitution. The image of God is now broken in man, but this indicates the destruction of his spirituality; on the contrary, it is a sign that man's spirituality was corrupted and permeated by the reality of evil and darkness in all respects. The image of God seems to remain in the human being after the fall, but its shape is badly smashed, while its content seems to have been highly depraved as a result of the devil's dark and evil influence.[205]

As far as Böhme is concerned, the image of God continues to characterize the essence of the human being in its fallen state, but it is corrupted, depraved, and defiled by the principle of darkness, which now sheds its darkness on the human being. This is why Böhme writes that the devil shows his fragility and mortality in the broken image of God which can be found in man. Böhme's imagery is not only interesting, but also fundamentally dualistic, an aspect which Baur certainly did not miss: while, by creation, man was meant to be wholly spiritual and, in this respect, God was intended to mirror its eternity and infinity in the human being, which is God's image,[206] after the fall, it is no longer God who mirrors himself in man, but the devil, which shows his finitude and brittleness in the corrupted image of God within man's being.[207]

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[202] Man is corporeal in Böhme, and this is not necessarily a bad thing since matter constitutes God's way to reveal himself. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, 22.

[203] In Böhme, nature is "*mater* and *nutrix*" for the human being. See Paul Bishop, "'Yonder Lies the Grave-Island, the Silent Island; Yonder, too, Are the Graves of My Youth: A Commentary on Zarathustra's Grave-Song", 317–342, in *Orbis Litterarum* 57.5 (2002): 321.

[204] In Böhme, man's existence was placed between the spiritual and the material worlds, which inspired Hegel to see man as a being with a dual constitution: spiritual and nature, both constituent aspects of the absolute. See Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult*, 133.

[205] Because of the evil which taints his existence, man is also the image of the world. See Luc Benoist, *The Esoteric Path. An Introduction to the Hermetic Tradition* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2005, first published 1965), 115.

At this point, Baur must have noticed Böhme's dualism, in the sense that man's being shifts from the image of God to the broken image of God. On the other hand, the influences which affect man's being are God (and the corresponding principle of light) before the fall and the devil (accompanied by the corresponding principle of darkness) after the fall; because after the fall man stands under the influence of the devil and the principle of darkness, he is totally unable to see himself otherwise. Thus, he is not only under the power of the devil, darkness, fragility, finitude, and materiality; he is also under the conviction that he is meant to be fragile, finite, and material.[208] Man's original spirituality which allowed him to perceive himself as light and infinitude is not so darkened that he cannot see himself in God's terms; the only way he can understand himself is thoroughly influenced by the devil, fragility, and mortality. This grim picture of humanity though is not Böhme's last word concerning man. Despite the awfulness of man's situation after the fall, he underlines that it is within man's corrupted being that hope eventually emerges. A new reality, which Böhme calls "the blessed love", is able to change man's perspective on himself, but also his spirituality. This "blessed love" is the "innate Son of the Father", who rises and blossoms anew in Adam in the very center of his life birth, or in the very core of his being:[209]

> (...) the birth of his life henceforward consisted, in the third principle, that is in the [region,] kingdom, or dominion of the stars and elements, and he must now eat of the virtue and fruit thereof, and live thereby, and upon this he then supposed, that he was past recovery, and that the noble image of God was destroyed. And besides, the devil also continually represented his corruptibility and mortality to him, and himself could see nothing else (...). But the favorable love, (that is, the only begotten Son of God), or that I may set it down so that it may be understood, the lovely

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[206] See Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 15–16.

[207] Compare Vetterling, *The Illuminate of Görlitz or Jakob Böhme's Life and Philosophy*, Volume 1, 357–358.

[208] See also Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult*, 56–57.

[209] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 4:4–5, Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 596–597.

> fountain where the light of God is generated), sprung up, and grew again in Adam, in the center of the birth of his life (...).[210]

The imagery of the Son which is born within the human being prompts Böhme to characterize him as the "pure source" which informs man's rationality; it is, in the end, God's light which is born again within man's corrupted being.

Böhme's mentioning of the innate Son of the Father within Adam gives Baur the chance to come up with a very brief—though important—comment, which has to do with the fact that in the center of each life birth there is also a center of a new birth. In other words, Adam—and in this respect he seems to be the representative of each human being—has the capacity not only to exist according to his life birth, but also to change the course of his existence when he activates within himself what Böhme calls "the new birth".[211] The new birth though appears to be man's ability to address his current existence in a meaningful way, which prompts him to understand his life in the material world in a fundamentally different fashion. This is to say that the new birth is some kind of return to man's original spirituality, when the principle of light and love reenters man's life and thus illuminates his material existence by overcoming—at least to some extent—the power of the principle of darkness.[212] The principle of fragility does not seem to be stopped and man's existence is not said to continue forever in its material form; nevertheless, the new birth which is worked out by the innate Son of the Father offers Adam—and every human being for that matter—the possibility of a new perspective on one's life, despite the materiality, fragility, and finitude of man's life. The new birth presupposes the rise of the heart or of the Son of God within man's physical life—which is totally in line with traditional Christianity as far as Böhme is concerned—but when it comes to Baur, Böhme's conviction seems to be understood only as the emergence of a new understanding within the context of man's old, finite life.[213]

Böhme is convinced that this is exactly the connection between the fall and salvation—the fact that man's old, finite life can be illuminated by a new life which is worked out by the Son of God—although for Baur the whole discussion about the new birth of the Son of God within Adam appears to be only a new realization which Adam reaches by means of his own natural capacities. Thus, according to Baur, the fall and salvation are thoroughly connected within Adam's being, so each human has the capacity to be born again within his material life. This is probably why Baur points out that, in Böhme, the fall of man is described as the disappearance of the original and the heavenly virgin—God's wisdom[214]—from man's life. By creation, when Adam was wholly spiritual, God's wisdom was bound with his existence; after the fall though God's wisdom simply vanished from his life, so he was left to lead his by now material life devoid of God's wisdom and influenced by Lucifer's wisdom, which is also the wisdom of the material world.[215]

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[210] Behmen, "The Three Principles", 21.

[211] See Friedrich Ueberweg, *System of Logic and History of Logical Doctrines*, trans. Thomas M. Lindsay (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1871), 175.

[212] In Böhme, the new birth is man's realization that his existence consists of both light and darkness, heaven and hell. Compare Versluis, *Theosophia*, 181.

[213] This new understanding can refer to redemption and especially the relationship between good and evil. See Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 70.

It is interesting to notice at this point that the relationship between Adam and the reality of this world is presented by Böhme by means of personification, as a close connection between two antagonistic realities which offered Baur the chance to read Böhme—once more—in a dualistic way. What is really important here resides in Böhme's observation that, in his original state, Adam's spirituality seems to have been coupled with the materiality of the world, an aspect which does not match Böhme's general presentation of man. Thus, such a belief appears to be inconsistent with Böhme's previous conviction according to which the creation of the material world followed Adam's actual fall, because what Böhme explains now is that the material world did in fact exist before man's actual fall. At any rate, Böhme implies that there is a link between spirituality and materiality within Adam's original state since he was "from the world", and "lived in the world".[216]

Personification is used again by Böhme—this time, it is the personification of love[217]—in order to show that this connection was extremely powerful. Having been created by God, Adam was endowed with God's wisdom and, in this respect, he was the "noble virgin" who was able to understand the spirit of this world.[218] Adam was originally inspired by God, so he not only functioned according to God's wisdom, he was—at least to some degree—God's wisdom or, as Böhme puts it, God's virgin. The spirit of this world, which emerges from the nature of material creation, was the "young lad" who seems to have been attracted by “God’s virgin” since they lived together, one by the other, in some sort of common existence. To be sure, Adam is “God’s virgin” and the spirit of the world is “the young lad” and, in Böhme, this connection appears to describe Adam’s original state before the fall.[219] The dualism of Adam’s existence prior to the fall did not escape Baur’s attention, and this is why he quoted at length this key passage in Böhme, as a token that at least the spirit of materiality has been with Adam’s divine spirituality from the moment of his creation:[220]

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[214] More about God's virgin in Böhme, in Weeks, *Boehme*, 121.

[215] See also Versluis, *Wisdom's Children*, 303.

[216] Compare Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, 41–42.

[217] See Josephine Klein, "Considerations Pertinent to Theorizing about Spirituality", 589–600, in *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 21.4 (2005): 593.

[218] For details about Böhme's idea of the "noble virgin", see Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 181.

> But now man had also the spirit of this world, for he was [come] out of this world, and lived in the world, and Adam (understand the spirit which was breathed into him from God) was the chaste virgin, and the spirit which had been inherited out of nature, from the world, was the young man. These were now both together, and rested in one Adam.[221]

All these pieces of information are crucially important primarily because Adam is described in terms which allow for the possibility of the fall as well as of salvation before the actual moment of the fall. At the same time, the fall—which seems to be man’s total surrender to materiality—still preserved man’s capacity for salvation as a means to help Adam recover his initial spirituality within the compelling context of his material existence.[222]

In other words, man succumbed to materiality because the spirit of the material world was within his being from the beginning, but he can also be born again to his initial spirituality because the Son of God or God’s heart was a defining element of his original creation when God’s wisdom was a part of his existence. This Böhmian conviction pushes Baur towards the Hegelian identification between spirit and matter, a key aspect which informs his understanding of the Christian religion as Gnosis; so, having read Böhme, Baur must have been convinced that Christian theology should be viewed just like any other religion as well as like a religious manifestation of Gnosis which is essentially dualistic and can be investigated rationally following a pattern so successfully established by Hegel.

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[219] See also Hanegraaff, “Human Potential before Esalen”, 17–44, in Kripal and Shuck (eds.), *Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture*, 29.

[220] Böhme, *Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens*, 12:40–42 (although Baur indicates 12:38 as the beginning of the quotation), Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 597.

[221] Behmen, “The Three Principles”, 89.

[222] Compare Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 219.

PART 2

What did Baur Learn from Hegel?

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CHAPTER 4

The Overlapping of Spirit and Matter

Baur's Hegelian Understanding of God as Spirit in the Human Being

The first thing Baur learned from Hegel was the overlapping relationship between spirit and matter, which investigates how God should be seen as spirit in connection to the reality of man's life. Thus, the way one should understand the being of God is so crucially important for Hegel that Baur simply appropriates Hegel's perspective on God, which he later uses for his own purposes. Baur though appears to have been keenly aware that the key for the proper comprehension of what God really entails in Hegel has to do with his most fundamental duality between affirmation and negation, which, as Hegel explains, go hand in hand with another conceptual pair, namely that of ending (finite) and unending (infinite):[1]

> (...) The finite vanishes in the infinite; it is its nature to posit the infinite as its truth; the infinite, which has thus come to be in this manner, is, however, itself as yet only the abstract infinite; it is only negatively determined as the non-finite. The essential nature of the infinite, too, on its part, as being this merely negatively determined infinite, is to annul itself and to determine itself; in fact, to annul and absorb its negation, to posit itself on the one hand as affirmation, and on the other to annul in like manner its abstraction, and to particularise itself and posit the moment of finitude within itself. The finite vanishes at first in the infinite; it is not, its being is only a semblance of Being. We have then the infinite before us as an abstract infinite only, enclosed within its own sphere; and it belongs to its real nature to abolish this abstraction, this results from the notion or conception of the infinite. It is the negation of the negation—the negation relating itself to itself—and this is absolute affirmation, and at the same time being, simple reference to itself: such is Being. Since this is the case, the second element too, the infinite, is not universally posited, but is also affirmation, and thus its nature is to determine itself within itself, to preserve the moment of finitude within itself, but ideally. It is negation of the negation, and thus contains the differentiation of the

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[1] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 318.

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> negation from the other negation. Thus limitation is involved in it, and consequently the finite too. If we define the negation more strictly, when we see that the one is the infinite and the other the finite, and true infinitude is the unity of the two.[2]

This essential dualism postulates that God is an idea which encapsulates two principles, in the sense that affirmation may be connected with the idea of light while negation with that of darkness.[3] God's identity as a notion implies both his identity and his otherness, so God's identity is affirmation and light, while his otherness is negation and darkness.[4] The very definition of God's being must include this dualism because this is also the definition of the spirit.[5] Thus, God is the spirit and the spirit is light and darkness, affirmation and negation, identity and otherness. There is a clear opposition or even conflict within God's being, but this antithesis should be understood as an opposition of ideas and principles. God may be the spirit but, in his capacity as spirit, God is an idea, a notion, a concept which informs human understanding.

This is why the opposition within the idea of God cancels itself in the human being because it brings with it the idea of peace and reconciliation.[6] God is the object of man's understanding, which makes man the subject that is interested in the idea of God. It is within the subject, or the human subject, that God as an idea which entails the opposition between affirmation and negation becomes a notion wherein this opposition is cancelled due to the concept of reconciliation. The human being as a subject is characterized as being-for-himself, so it is within his own being and personal existence that the human being deals with the idea of God, light and darkness, the opposition between the two, and then the cancellation (*Aufhebung*)[7] thereof through the idea of reconciliation. This is possible because the spirit is a finite spirit, most likely because the idea of the spirit in Hegel seems to be confined to the reality of the human being's material constitution. If matter is finite, then the spirit—which is inextricably connected with matter—is also finite.[8] By extension, even God as spirit—which in Hegel in concealed in the notion of "the Other"—seems to be finite since it is conceived by the finite spirit of the human being. Here is what Hegel has to say about finitude, the human being, and the reality of the Other:[9]

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[2] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 327–328.

[3] Compare Robert R. Williams, "Theology and Tragedy", 39–58, in David Kolb (ed.), *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 50.

[4] For details about the relationship between otherness and negation in Hegel, see Richard N. Lebow, "Motives, Evidence, Identity: Engaging My Critics", 486–494, in *International Theory* 2.3 (2010): 487.

[5] See also Hans Küng, *The Incarnation of God. An Introduction to Hegel's Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 220.

[6] See Dale M. Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim. A Critical Reflection* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 222–223.

[7] Compare Michael Welker, "Habermas and Ratzinger on the Future of Religion", 456–473, in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63.4 (2010): 457ff.

> That man is finite means, in the first place, that I as man stand in relation to what is other than myself. There is actually present an Other, the negative of myself, with which I am in connection, and that constitutes my finiteness. We are mutually exclusive, and are independent in relation to each other. Such I am in virtue of my having sensuous experience; all that is living is thus exclusive. In hearing and seeing, I have only what is individual before me, and in my practical relation to things I have always to do with what is only single or individual; the objects which give me satisfaction are in like manner individual. This is the standpoint of natural Being, of natural existence. According to this, I exist in manifold relations, in external Being of a manifold kind, in the region of experiences, needs, practical, and theoretical relation, all of which, according to their content, are limited and dependent, finite, in short. The annulling of what is finite is already found to have its place within this finiteness; every impulse as subjective relates itself to what is Other than itself, is finite.[10]

Surely the spirit is finite because it exists and manifests itself within nature; nature is the playground of the spirit and the "sphere of alienation and unrest",[11] the realm where the spirit must find its path to reconciliation.[12] The spirit goes through a whole process of alienation and unrest as it seeks to find a way to cancel them; in doing so, however, the spirit must find a way to cancel not only his alienation and unrest, but also the opposition between affirmation and negation within the very concept of God, which is instrumental in this particular process of nullifying man's alienation. For the human spirit, nature is the revelation of God; it is in nature that man or the spirit begins to understand the idea of God, but also to know God as an idea. Thus, the human spirit has a certain awareness of God, but this awareness is mediated through nature and history;[13] moreover, it is because of this material mediation that the spirit is characterized by finitude.[14] Finitude makes this awareness unhappy and it may lead to despair, which is seen as man's desire to unite himself with the absolute despite his finite nature.[15]

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[8] Peter Hodgson, "Hegel's Proofs of the Existence of God", 414–430, in Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (eds.), *A Companion to Hegel* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 418.

[9] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 175.

[10] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 180–181.

[11] See Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel. From Surrealism to Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 5.

[12] See Morton Schoolman, "Introduction", ix–xiv, in Fred R. Dallmayr, *G.W.F. Hegel. Modernity and Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), x–xi.

In Hegel, nature is some sort of wrapping or a false shape which points to God, but the spirit must not limit itself to nature when it comes to God's knowledge. The spirit must go beyond the materiality of nature towards the spirituality of the idea of God and once the spirit is aware of this possibility it begins its ascension to God. This is where history and philosophy become one in Hegel and his history of religions is seen as part of his philosophy of religion. As a finite spirit, man begins his ascent to God in nature;[16] in other words, the finite spirit begins to discover his own truth within himself by resorting to the concept of God. The ascension of the finite spirit to God is the result of religion. It is in fact an ascension of the finite spirit within its own self in a process[17] during which the finite spirit discovers his capacity to discern between his materiality and spirituality. The spirit must realize that he is one with himself, that he—the human being as finite spirit—can understand the idea of religion as a process which produces "the spirit".[18]

The finite spirit, therefore, realizes himself only through religion, when he fully comprehends that he, as a spirit, must bring about "the spirit". Religion happens in history and this is why the process of "spirit-production" goes through a certain development;[19] the concept of religion thus has its distinctive historical moments and definitions, it emerges into new stages and levels as history unfolds but in all these aspects religion is a process which produces "the spirit". This is why religion is self-contained and self-mediated in the sense that it conveys and transmits its own spiritual product, which is the spirit.[20]

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[13] Compare Elisabeth M. Loevlie, "God's Invisible Traces: The Sacred in Fallen Language, Translation, and Literariness", 442–458, in *Literature and Theology* 23.4 (2009): 455, n. 5.

[14] Also check Quentin Lauer, SJ, *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 1976, 2nd edition 1993), 287.

[15] For details, see Daniel Berthold-Bond, "Lunar Musings? An Investigation of Hegel's and Kierkegaard's Portraits of Despair", 33–59, in *Religious Studies* 34.1 (1998): 36–37.

[16] See Robert Stern, *G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel's Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of the Spirit* (London: Routledge, 1993, reprinted 1998, 2001), 5.

[17] In Hegel, the self is defined by mobility; it has the capacity to move in more than just one way: as organism/being, as mind/intellect/will, and especially as speaker, in which case it externalizes the mind/intellect/will. See also Andrea Brady, "Echo, Irony, and Repetition in the Writings of Denise Riley", 1–19, in *Contemporary Women's Writing* 5.3 (2011): 6.

[18] Compare Kathleen Dow Magnus, *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 234.

It is important to notice at this point that Hegel makes a sharp distinction between historical religions[21] and the idea of religion itself,[22] and it seems that Baur agrees since he does not come forward with any criticism in this respect. Historical religions are manifestations of the concept of religion, so they do not correspond to the concept entirely in the sense that while historical religions appear to be connected with the reality of the material world, the concept of religion transcends them as a manifestation of a purely spiritual nature. The dualism between material and spiritual is evident here, while the superiority of the latter is also ascertained because of the non-overlapping of historical religions with the notion of religion. In other words, the concept of religion cannot be found in its fullness throughout the historical manifestations of religion. There is however a liaison between the historical religions and the idea of religion because humanity must achieve the notion of religion in the actual manifestation thereof.[23] This is no easy task, Hegel contends, but the most people can do when it comes to manifesting the spirituality of religion in historical forms is to connect the definition of the concept of religion with their religious awareness. Since the concept of religion is investigated by means of reason—but reason is said to have limitations in accessing God and the infinite—Hegel suggests that reason be investigated first, and only then can one assess whether a philosophy of religion is possible or not. In other words, one needs to prove that reason has the right to deal with the issues of religion:[24]

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[19] History, therefore, is the foundation of criticism and understanding in Hegel, and idea which was taken over also by the Frankfurt School. See Christopher Hobson, "Toward a Critical Theory of Democratic Peace", 1903–1922, in *Review of International Studies* 37.4 (2011): 1914.

[20] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 689–690.

[21] For details about what Hegel understands by historical religions, see David Tracy, "On the Origins of Philosophy of Religion: The Need for a Narrative of Its Founding", 11–36, in Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy (eds.), *Myth and Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 24–25.

[22] For Hegel's notion of religion, see Thomas A. Lewis, *Religion, Modernity, and Politics in Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.

[23] For further information about the connection between historical religions and the idea of religion in Hegel, see Frederick C. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy. 18th and 19th Century German Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2003, first published 1963), 237.

> (…) The right of reason to occupy itself with the doctrines of religion has to be proved. (…) It is asserted that philosophical knowledge, when it deals with Spirit in its true essence, in and for itself, with life, with the infinite, only produces mistakes, and that reason must renounce all claim to grasp anything of the infinite in an affirmative manner; the infinite is destroyed by thought, is brought down to the level of the finite. This result, in regard to reason, this negation of reason, is even said to be a result of rational knowledge itself. Thus it would be necessary first to examine reason itself in order to ascertain whether the capability of knowing God, and consequently the possibility of a philosophy of religion, is inherent in it.[25]

It is not as if Hegel had doubts about the power of reason; he only attempts to present counter-arguments fairly. Regarding reason, however he is fully convinced that it has the capacity to investigate, if not the doctrines of religion, at least religion in itself, or positive religion as it manifests itself in history:[26]

> Rational or philosophical knowledge comes (…) and must of necessity come, into relation with positive religion. It has been said indeed, and is said still, that positive religion is "for itself", or stands on its own basis. We do not question its doctrines; we respect than, and hold them in honor; on the other side stands reason, thought, which seeks to grasp its object intellectually, and these two are supposed not to come into relation; reason is not to interfere with these doctrines.[27]

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[24] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 51.

[25] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 50. It is not as if Hegel had doubts about the power of reason; he only attempts to present some counter-arguments. Regarding reason, however, he is fully convinced that it has the capacity to investigate, if not the doctrines of religion, at least religion it itself, or positive religion as it manifests itself in history. Hegel, however, goes a bit further as he is convinced that reason has the capacity to investigate the content of religion, and especially that of the doctrines of Christianity, because reason is the evidence of divinity within humanity. See also Philip M. Merklinger, *Philosophy, Theology, and Hegel's Berlin Philosophy of Religion, 1821–1827* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 124.

[26] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 49–50.

[27] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 49.

To be sure, whatever happens in history concerning religion must be in full accordance with what religion, as a concept, entails in reality. Man's religious awareness must not be separated from the definition of religion, which shows the fundamental dualism which exists between the theoretical concept of religion and the practical expressions of religion within history. The forms which religion takes in history must come as close as possible to the idea of religion, which means that the perfect concept of religion must realize itself in every religious manifestation that exists in history.[28] When this happens absolute religion has come into being.[29] Conversely, absolute religion is the embodiment of the concept of religion in a historical form which applies as many characteristics of the idea of religion as one possibly can in the actual practice of a certain historical manifestation of religion. Finitude—evidently the finitude of materiality or the limitations of the physical existence of humanity—can be waived through the work of the spirit,[30] and the work of the spirit seems to be the absolute religion or the best possible application of the idea of religion in daily practice. Should this occur in a form of historical religion, then one can claim that vanity and nothingness were revealed to the religious awareness of the spirit. When the human spirit, which is limited and finite, applies the idea of religion in the best possible way and the vanity of materiality is disclosed to his spiritual awareness, then the finite spirit becomes free and therefore unlimited or infinite.[31]

Consequently, infinity and total freedom[32] are possible within the reality of the material world provided that human religious awareness opens itself to the best possible application of the features of the idea of religion; in other words, total freedom and eternity become possible only when human spirituality reaches the climax of the application of the notion of religion in a certain religious manifestation in history. Baur notices here that, in Hegel, when the idea of religion manifests itself in the world, religion takes historical forms, so a distinction should be made between three separate aspects: first, the concept of religion; second, the definition of religion, and third, absolute religion, which in Hegel is Christianity. In Hegel's words:[33]

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[28] Perfection in Hegel seems to be applicable only to concepts, since everything else in nature is unable to meet that standard. See also Robert H. Bell, "Fielding, Fooling, and Feeling", 1–18, in *Literary Imagination* 13.1 (2010): 8.

[29] Compare Stephen Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel in the Development of Hegel's Thinking* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 242ff.

[30] See also John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion. The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 92.

[31] This is a constant hope in Hegel. See Thomas A. Spragens, Jr., "Populist Perfectionism: The Other American Liberalism", 141–163, in *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24.1 (2007): 154.

[32] More details about Hegel's idea of infinite religion can be found in Karl-Otto Apel, "Kant, Hegel, and the Contemporary Question Concerning the Normative Foundations of Morality and Right", 49–80, in Robert B. Pippin and Ottfried Höffe (eds.), *Hegel on Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 60ff.

> [The] knowledge of Spirit for itself or actually, as it is in itself or potentially, is the being in-and-for-itself of Spirit as exercising knowledge, the perfect, absolute religion, in which it is revealed what Spirit, what God is; this is the Christian religion.[34]

Also in line with Hegel, Baur highlights that the definition of religion takes two distinct forms, the religion of nature (or natural religion)[35] and the religion of spiritual individuality.[36]

The idea of history is crucial here because, as Baur notices, Hegel is convinced that it took hundreds of years for the work of the spirit—evidently the human spirit—to develop the concept of religion into practical and historical manifestations. Religion or rather the concept of religion must be taken out from the non-mediation and naturalness of the material world. This seems to mean that the idea of religion must be thought of in a spiritual way but this process of refining the idea of religion by elevating it above the mundane historicity of the world happens throughout many centuries and takes a tremendous amount of effort. Thus, according to Baur, Hegel expresses his conviction that the spirit of the world, or the spirit of humanity in general, has diligently worked at the forms of its development through the huge extent of world history. The religious awareness of humanity must be elevated above the historicity of religion to the spirituality of the concept of religion but this whole process is extremely long, demanding, and pretentious. The human spirit is able to assume this important task of applying the concept of religion to a certain form of religious manifestation, but in doing so he must leave aside any inferiority and strive for the superiority of religious spirituality.

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[33] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 83.

[34] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 83–84.

[35] Compare Brian Morris, *Anthropological Studies of Religion. An Introductory Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16.

[36] For details about Hegel's idea of spiritual individuality as applied to religion, see Mark C. Taylor, *Nots* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 14.

The immediate result of this approach is the cancellation of traditional transcendence[37] because God is no longer perceived as a spirit which has an objective, real, and personal existence; God does not exist as a being which is separated from humanity; God is God only within the human being.[38] To be more precise, God is God only if man is considered to be God and this sheds significant light on Baur's conviction that the spirit of Adam or Christ—the spirit of two distinct human beings—is the "divine spirit of humanity".[39] God is man and man is God because his spirit can be said to be divine in persons such as Adam or Christ.[40] If the human spirit was present in some individuals like Adam or Christ, then it is possible that it should be present in any human being provided that he or she is preoccupied in applying the concept of religion in daily life according to his or her best intentions. Human spirituality is therefore the whole idea of divinity and God's transcendence is reduced to the historicity and materiality of humanity given that individual human beings manifest evident interest in spirituality.[41]

Having enumerated Hegel's three main points about religion—first, the concept of religion; second, the definition of religion or religion in general; and third, the absolute religion—Baur focuses on the second issue as he attempts to come with further details about Hegel's understanding of it, which he apparently endorses as no particular comments against it are revealed at this point. As he has already explained that religion in general comprises the religion of nature and the religion of spiritual individuality, Baur goes on with a brief presentation of both as well as with further categorization of each in particular. Thus, he explains that, in Hegel, the religion of nature is unmediated religion, because the human being conceptualizes the idea of religion concerning the reality of the physical world perceived through man's individual existence, but at the same time without any theoretical interference:[42]

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[37] Hegel's cancellation of traditional transcendence is seen by Kierkegaard as the "naturalization of the supernatural", a secularizing principle which moves the divine spirit within man's being. See Jamie Turnbull, "Kierkegaard on Emotion: A Critique of Furtak's *Wisdom in Love*", 489–508, in *Religious Studies* 46.4 (2010): 494.

[38] Compare Sharon Portnoff, "Fackenheim's Hegelian Return to Contingency", 161–178, in Sharon Portnoff, James A. Diamond, and Martin D. Yaffe (eds.), *Emil L. Fackenheim. Philosopher, Theologian, Jew* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 170.

[39] In building his concept of the spirit, Hegel uses certain aspects pertaining to biblical imagery, especially aspects about Adam and Christ. See Graham Ward, *Christ and Culture* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 192.

[40] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 690–691.

[41] For Hegel's reversal of God's traditional transcendence, see Frédéric Conrod, "Face-to-Face with the Dying Priest: Dialogue between a Libertine and a Pope in *Histoire de Juliette*", 331–344, in *Literature and Theology* 24.4 (2010): 342.

> [The] specific character [of the religion of nature] is in a general sense the unite of the natural and spiritual, in such wise that the objective side—God—is posited as something natural, and consciousness is limited to the determinateness of nature. This natural element is particular existence, not nature in generally viewed as a whole, as an organic totality. (…) Nature, as a whole, is posited as units or particulars; classes, species, belong to a further stage of reflection and of the mediation of thought. This particular natural object, this heaven, this sun, this animal, this man—these immediate natural forms of existence are known as God. The question as to what content is found in this idea of God may here be left undetermined to begin with, and at this stage it is something indefinite, an undefined power or force which cannot as yet be filled up.[43]

For instance, the notion of religion, which is spiritual in nature, finds corresponding material and physical events or phenomena in nature that are interpreted in a non-material way. In fact, spiritual insights seem to be objectified by means of attaching them to specific things, events, or phenomena which exist in nature.[44] This is why Baur points out that, in Hegel, the religion of nature represents the unity between the spiritual and the natural, between spirit and matter, since the spirit is objectified materially.[45] God, the essence of religion, is also objectified materially, which is an indication that the concept of God is seen in material terms; man's religious awareness is biased towards nature to a larger extent and degree than to non-material ideas. In other words, the spirit is identical with nature in this particular case and it seems that the spirit is trapped or imprisoned within the materiality of nature, which prompts Baur to acknowledge that natural religion is a religion of slavery and bondage, as Hegel himself wrote:[46]

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[42] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 279.

[43] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 286–287.

[44] See also Paul Cobben, *The Nature of Self. Recognition in the Form of Right and Morality* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 129–132.

[45] For details about how ideas are objectified materially, see Gavin Kitching, *Karl Marx and the Philosophy of Praxis* (London: Routledge, 1988), 17.

[46] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 84.

> The external form of the essence in the religion of nature is only a pictorial representation of nature, an outer covering which does not truly separate the two sides of what constitutes the religious relation, and is therefore only an unessential separation of the two, only a superficial distinction. (…) Because of the character which thus attaches to this relation (…) this people has been adopted on the condition of its having the fundamental feeling of its dependence, i.e., of its servitude.[47]

The lack of freedom is evident since the spirit is captured within the matter of natural phenomena and materiality explains spirituality. Following Hegel, Baur's next step is to provide his readers with three main manifestations of natural religion, which he believes perfectly embody the fact that religious ideas are trapped within the materiality of natural realities: first, the religion of magic,[48] which has to do with witchcraft and is characterized by the being-in-oneself, some sort of egocentric approach of religion that is meant primarily to assist the individual person, and is not directed necessarily for the good of others; second, the religion of fantasy,[49] which he believes to be Indian religion, and it is quite a pity that no details are given here for a better understanding of what Baur means by fantasy and how fantasy is connected with or disconnected from the materiality of the world; and third, the religion of the transition to a higher level or a religion which aspires for higher things.[50] Two directions must be distinguished here: first, the religion of the good or the religion of light, which is the Persian religion;[51] and second, the religion of mystery, which is the Egyptian religion.[52] The second main trend of religion in general is the religion of spiritual individuality which opposes the egoistic being-in-oneself of the natural religion with the more altruistic being-for-oneself of an evidently spiritual approach to religion since, in this respect, religion is not characterized by belief, imagination, or feelings, but rather by reason, ideas, and concepts.[53]

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[47] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 211–212.

[48] More details about the religion of magic in Hegel can be found in Robert Bernasconi, "Hegel at the Court of the Ashanti", 41–63, in Stuart Barnett (ed.), *Hegel after Derrida* (London: Routledge, 1998), 53.

[49] For further information about Hegel's theory about the religion of fantasy, see Peter C. Hodgson, "Editorial introduction", 1–72, in G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, One-volume edition: The Lectures of 1827, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 41, 46ff.

[50] Compare Peter Dews, *The Idea of Evil* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 95.

[51] See also Brian Johnston, *The Ibsen Cycle. The Design of the Plays from* Pillars of Society *to* When We Dead Awaken, revised edition (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 301.

[52] See Terry Pinkard, *Hegel. A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 583.

In Baur, and also in Hegel, the religion of spiritual individuality does not dismiss nature entirely but while natural religion assigns too much to nature (because it incapsulates the objectified religious feelings of the human being), it treats nature only for what it is, namely as the material reality of the physical world. In other words, for the religion of spiritual individuality, nature does not have spiritual connotations; nature is taken for what it is worth, so it is considered the material context for the historical expression of religion.[54] Nature is natural life, corporality, and what is determined by the subject, or the human being. Nature has no spiritual meaning; nature only has material significance as the framework wherein religion works. According to Baur, who uses Hegel, the religion of spiritual individuality, which is characterized by the selfless being-for-oneself has three main historical manifestations: first, the Judaic/Jewish religion;[55] second, the Greek religion;[56] and third, the Roman religion.[57] Only brief descriptions are attached to each, so while the Jewish religion is presented as reflection, the negation of the unity of nature, the spiritual One, the belief in a God who exists in himself and against whom nature is considered non-essential (which allows Baur to accept Judaism as the religion of dignity), the Greek religion is seen as a perfect union between nature and the spirit with the specification that the spirit is the most important aspect and in fact defines nature.[58]

The spirit illuminates nature in this respect, so the Greek religion depicts the spirit in unity with corporality; in other words, corporality is the expression of the spirit, so the spirit cannot exist without the corporality of matter. The spirit exists and manifests itself in and through material corporality; this is why the Greek religion speaks about divine manifestations, divine corporality, divine materiality, divine naturalness; all these can be read as spiritual corporality, spiritual materiality, and spiritual naturalness, which turns Greek religion in a religion of beauty. The third religion is the Roman religion, in which the power of nature is served even by gods; the individual spirit is to be found in gods as a projection outside itself. The roman religion is a religion that promotes practicability and functionality; this is why Baur not only says that it is the religion of "external convenience or usefulness" but also compares it with the Roman rule over the world.[59]

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[53] For a critique of Hegel's idea of the religion of spiritual individuality, see Bruno Petzold, *The Classification of Buddhism Bukkyō Kyōhan. Comprising the Classification of Buddhist Doctrines in India, China, and Japan*, in collaboration with Shinshō Hanayama, ed. Shohei Ichimura (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1995), 565.

[54] For details, see James Conroy Doig, *In Defense of Cognitive Realism. Cutting the Cartesian Knot* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 94–95.

[55] Compare Mark C. Taylor, *Journeys of Selfhood. Hegel and Kierkegaard* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2000), 109.

[56] See also Jacques Taminiaux, "Finitude and the Absolute. Remarks on Hegel and Heidegger", 187–209, in Thomas Sheehan (ed.), *Heidegger. The Man and the Thinker* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1981), 199–200.

[57] See Craig B. Matarrase, *Starting with Hegel* (London: Continuum, 2010), 159–160.

[58] Baur's interest in the Greek religion influenced his understanding of Christianity, and especially of Paul's theology, which he considered throughly hellenized. See Andrie du Toit, "*Paulus Oecumenicus*: Interculturality in the Shaping of Paul's Theology", 121–143, in *New Testament Studies* 55.2 (2009): 122.

Like Hegel, Baur shows an evident preoccupation with the second level of religious development, which is the religion of spiritual individuality, because it points to the fact that revelation through nature, but also through the materiality of the world is eventually only one facet of man's elevation to God.[60] In other words, this kind of religion is based on man's conviction that he can reach, understand, and experience the concept of God in a practical way as a result of his investigation of nature and matter as the latter exists in the former. The other side of this religious development has to do with the finite spirit,[61] which in Baur's thought is crucially important. The finite spirit is concerned with man's ability to see and perceive matter in a non-material way, which for Baur appears to be a religious methodology based on man's faculty of reason[62] as it develops throughout history.[63] If non-materiality is reason—and not feelings or sentiments of any sort—then his approach to religion is essentially rationalistic and redefines divinity, as well as the concept of God himself, based on human rationality.[64]

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[59] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 691–692.

[60] See Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, reprinted 2003), 115.

[61] For details, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, reprinted 1999), 90.

[62] For the relationship between nature and spirit, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 105.

[63] Baur found inspiration in Hegel's stress on the historicity of reason. See Ulrich H.J. Körtner, "Incarnate Reason: Problems in Rendering Christian Anthropology Accessible tot he Contemporary Bioethical Discourse—A Commentary on Peter Dabrock", 158–176, in *Christian Bioethics* 16.2 (2010): 167.

[64] This approach secularizes the traditional understanding of Christianity based on the use of "discursive philosophical reason". See Aaron E. Hinkley, "Kierkegaard's Ethics of Agape, the Secularization of the Public Square, and Bioethics", 54–63, in *Christian Bioethics* 17.1 (2011): 54–55.

Baur thus explains, and this is again in line with Hegel, that the progress of religion is in fact the elevation of human religious awareness above nature; in other words, it is the elevation of man's religious awareness above the materiality of the physical world through the active exercise of his reason. This is what Baur calls "the advance from naturalness to spiritual individuality", but the idea of spirituality here should not be understood as having anything to do with the traditional belief in God's objective and spiritual transcendence over the material world; on the contrary, the individuality of the spirit is the progress of the human mind from truth—which seems to be ascertained by reason—to the science of the spirit, which appears to be the rational exercise of human reason in order to discern the meaning of the material world in non-material or spiritual terms. Consequently, Baur expresses his conviction that the higher level of God's self revelation to the finite spirit of the human being is the percept or the impression of an object obtained through the use of human senses. It is not the feeling which moves the heart but rather the perception which moves reason. Man exists in the objectivity of the world's materiality and it is within this particular context that he has to discover God in order to build a perspective on the world for himself. This can only be done through unmediated awareness and this is achieved only through the perception—rational in nature—of the objectivity of the world's physical and material constitution. It is from here that man's reason has to build his perspective on the world in order to reach the higher rationalistic understanding of the individuality of the spirit, which is the appropriation of the idea of divinity on rationalistic grounds.

In other words, this is what Baur calls "God's appearance in the flesh", namely the idea of God—which is fundamentally theoretical and rational—becomes meaningful in the material body of the human being.[65] Baur is aware that in Hegel, God, or rather the idea of God, must be known as "being-for-others", which is being-for-humans and the concept of "humans" here refers to the individual human person.[66] It is only in this way that man can reach the reality of reconciliation; this is the only way through which man can rid himself of his alienation.[67] As alienation is induced by the meaninglessness of the materiality of the world, escaping this condition requires the use of reason for the rediscovery of the idea of God as being-for-others, an idea which is able to convey meaning for each human being. When this happens, another realization comes into being, namely that the unity between divine and human nature—which exists in itself—is fully known, and by this Baur most certainly means that it is fully known rationally. It is now that man is able to understand and see himself being incorporated in God; humanity becomes one with divinity, and the materiality of physical nature—man and the world included—becomes meaningful as a result of the understanding that divinity can be rationally found within humanity. In other words, spirituality is innate to the material human being; the spirit already exists in matter, but it has to be rediscovered by using reason.

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[65] Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul. An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 1997), 16.

[66] See also Nancy Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 224.

[67] Compare Michael O. Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy. The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.

As a result, God is no longer alien to the human being; God and man live within the same material reality of the latter, while the spirituality of the former finds its full achievement only in the matter of the latter's existence in the physical world. According to Baur, man has to understand that he is not an "external accident" in comparison to God's nature—as if God's nature and man's nature were objectively distinct in reality—but on the contrary, man is included or incorporated "in God" with respect to his being and freedom. Man is a free being when he understands that divinity is not external to him but internal to his material being and this specific understanding of the individual self is possible if reason is properly used in order to achieve the religion of spiritual individuality. Man is no longer a subject and God the object of his spiritual search; man is the subject "in God", meaning that his entire existence can be understood as being incorporated within the spirituality of the idea of divinity if accepted rationalistically.

This explains Baur's conclusion that the unity between divinity and humanity, which exists in itself, has to be revealed to the human being in an objective way; in other words, the objectivity of the world and of the human being contains within itself the unity between divinity and humanity.[68] It is already there, as it were, it is already within the human being but it needs be discovered through reason; man has to understand that divinity and the idea of God are within the grasp of his own reason and, when this occurs, Baur contends that "the incarnation of God [actually] happens".[69] God becomes man because man understands that God is only an idea which can be appropriated and fully experienced in a meaningful way through his use of reason. In Baur, God becomes man when the finite spirit of man acquires the awareness of God (which is an idea), through reason, within his own finitude. This means that ideas (and especially the idea of incarnation) are crucial for man's reflection provided that reflection itself, or reason, is used properly, not as means to obscure man's heart. In Hegel's words:[70]

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[68] See also Jonathan Norgate, *Isaak A. Dorner. The Triune God and the Gospel of Salvation* (London: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2009), 82ff.

[69] See John E. Toews, *Hegelianism. The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, reprinted 1985), 271.

> [The] idea implies that the content is lifted up into objectivity, it is in connection with the latter of these that the content should justify itself on its own account on the one hand, and on the other, that the necessity of its essential connection with self-consciousness should be explained. (…) The infinite idea of the incarnation for example—that speculative central point—has so great a power in it that it penetrates irresistibly into the heart which is not as yet darkened by reflection.[71]

According to Hegel—and Baur concurs—in order for God or for the idea of God to be revealed to humanity, God must be understood as spirit which takes the form of non-mediacy, so God must exist as some sort of sentient or even material presence. The material form of God is man himself, Baur concludes having read Hegel, and divinity is man's spirituality; this is the only way which explains the idea of God rationally in order for man to understand the nature of the spirit and the nature of God. Man has to understand that God is spirit or, to be more precise (as Hegel and Baur both are in this respect), that God is the human spirit, a fact which can only be apprehended rationally through the exercise of the human mind which exists in the materiality of the flesh.[72]

Baur's Hegelian Understanding of God as Corporeal in Christ's Being

For Hegel, but also for Baur, the carnal presence of God—which is a corporeal presence endowed with senses[73]—presupposes the material shape that God reportedly takes in the physical world. If God assumes a corporeal presence then it means that God cannot have a shape which is different from that of the human being. In other words, God is to be found in the materiality of the human being and, conversely, the human being is to be considered in divine terms. Man is the spirit, man is God himself in the very actuality, materiality, and physicality of senses, worldliness, and corporeality. In Hegel, man cannot be conceived otherwise and neither can God:[74]

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[70] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 146.

[71] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 150–151.

[72] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 692.

[73] See also James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 152.

> God is in his own nature the mediation which man expresses. Man recognizes himself in God and God and man say of each other—that is the spirit of my spirit. Man is spirit just as God is spirit. He has also, it is true, finitude and the element of separation in him, but in religion he discards his finitude since his knowledge is the knowledge of himself in God.[75]

God, and by extension the idea of the spirit, cannot be thought of in exclusive spiritual terms; on the contrary, should one consider the possibility of talking about the spirit and spirituality, he or she would have to take into account the fact that the spirit takes a human, material, and corporeal shape.[76] There is an evident, as well as extremely powerful connection between spirit and matter when it comes to defining what the idea of God entails; this is why, for Hegel and Baur, what defines God is the unity between divinity and humanity, between divine and human nature.[77] This unity discloses that there is only one rationality, not two—as in traditional theology where one can speak of God's reason and man's reason—and this explains why the most fundamental rationality which is described as divine rests in fact on the conviction that this very rationality is the rationality of the human being.[78]

There is only one rationality and there is only one spirit, and this is the spirit of the human being which can also be described as divinity. God and man are the one and the same being; consequently, the spirit is finite and in his finitude the spirit has an inauthentic existence. The lack of authenticity of the spirit's existence, which is also the existence of the human being and also of God as spirit, discloses that human thinking is based on speculative thought and speculative thought seems to be connected with the corporeality of the human being itself. The unity between divine and human nature is not given primarily by human rationality, but rather by human corporeality and especially by the certainty or assurance which comes through the senses. In other words, the unity between divinity and humanity is defined by man's assurance—his conviction based on senses—and it takes the shape of an unmediated sensible perspective, which is produced by the "external *Dasein*", as Hegel explains in the following text:[79]

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[74] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 95.

[75] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 223–224.

[76] Compare Antonio López, *Spirit's Gift. The Metaphysical Insight of Claude Bruaire* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 42, especially n. 15.

[77] Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology. The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, reprinted 1996), 254ff.

[78] Julie E. Maybee, *Picturing Hegel. An Illustrated Guide to Hegel's* Encyclopedia Logic (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 15.

> Spirit produces this abstract result in itself just because it has given up this particular content of its will, the very substance of its life, and has renounced everything. It thus transforms into freedom the compulsion exercised upon it by fatality. For this force or compulsion can lay hold of it only by seizing on those sides of its nature which in its concrete existence have an inner and an outer determinate being. As connected with external existence, man is under the influence of external force in the shape of other men, of circumstances, and so on; but external existence has its roots in what is inward, in his impulses, interests, and aims (...).[80]

The "external *Dasein*" seems to be the human being as it exists in the materiality of the physical world,[81] a concrete existence, or a determinate being; it is the individual human person who is capable of having a perspective on the world which is shaped by rationality and perceptions. The human being is sure of what it perceives by senses and then comprehends by reason; this is the unmediated perspective on the world which is produced by the human being in its capacity as the "external *Dasein*".[82] The human being is able to understand the unity between unity and humanity, but in order for this to make sense, Hegel contends, the idea of God must be described in material or corporeal terms.[83] As Baur puts it, God must appear in the world in flesh and it is here that the idea of Christ as a fact of world history becomes relevant in religious philosophy. The notion of Christ is the practical application of the conviction that divine and human nature exist in an unbreakable unity. The historical appearance of Christ in the world can be considered in a dualistic fashion, so it is both unmediated and external, which means that disbelief can go hand in hand with historicity of Christ, while belief is connected with the spirituality thereof. The unmediated character of Christ's historical appearance has to do with his actuality and corporeality.

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[79] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 473–474.

[80] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 277–278.

[81] Compare Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism. The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, reprinted 1999), 195.

[82] Seyla Benhabib, "Obligation, Contract, and Exchange. On the Significance of Hegel's Abstract Right", 159–177, in Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.), *The State and Civil Society. Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 174.

[83] Slavoj Žižek, "The Fear of Four Words. A Modest Plea for the Hegelian Reading of Christianity", 24–109, in Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ. Paradox or Dialectic?*, ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2009), 73–74.

For Hegel, Christ is an actual man, who lived according to the truth and died as a "martyr of truth".[84] The external history of Christ is real for those who believe in him, but also for those who do not believe in him, which means that the reality of Christ's historical existence is as true as is the existence of Socrates.[85] To be sure, if one believes in the historical existence of Socrates, one must also believe in the historical existence of Christ. The factuality of Christ's existence, however, includes his death and Baur is convinced, certainly based on Hegel's understanding, that Christ's death is the reversal or the inversion of man's religious awareness. Christ's death is the center around which human religious awareness revolves on a constant basis because external perception and belief must be distinguished as elements of religious awareness. Some people display belief in Christ while others show only an intellectual knowledge about him; either way though, religious awareness is triggered regarding Christ, so religious awareness includes both belief in and intellectual knowledge about Christ. The awareness of this fundamental dualism between faith and reason is rooted in Baur's Hegelian conviction that intellectual considerations must be delivered in a spiritual way, based on the spirit of truth, which is the holy spirit.[86]

Following Hegel, Baur displays an acute sense of history not only because he compares Christ with Socrates to show that they were both historical characters, but also because Christ points to the factual reality that divinity can be said to exist within humanity. At the end of the day, regardless of whether Christ and Socrates are both historical figures, Christ seems to be more important than Socrates as it is only Christ that is connected with the idea of divine nature.[87] One can attach some sort of "higher consideration" to the image of Christ because in Christ God's nature is revealed in a plenary way. Faith or at least Christian faith for that matter is faith in Christ, and in this respect the notion of faith is essentially the awareness of absolute truth.[88] In this particular case, truth lies in the fact that God exists in himself and for himself, but also that God can be tied in with the idea of life process. The concept of Trinity in Hegel is also connected with the idea of life process and the fact that the entire universe can be contrasted with the notion of God:[89]

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[84] See also Nikolaus Lebkowicz, *Theory and Practice. A History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 177.

[85] See Joshua D. Goldstein, *Hegel's Idea of the Good Life. From Virtue to Freedom, Early Writings, and Mature Political Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 51.

[86] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 693–694.

[87] For further comparisons between Christ and Socrates, see Irina Paperno, *Suicide as a Cultural Institution in Dostoevsky's Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 8.

> [God] is the life-process, the Trinity, in which the universal puts itself into antithesis with itself, and is in this antithesis identical with itself. God in this element of eternity represents what enclosed itself in union with itself, the enclosing of himself with himself. Faith simply lays hold of the thought and has the consciousness that in Christ this absolute essential truth is perceived in the process of its development, and that it is through him that this truth has first been revealed.[90]

To be more precise, the reality of the universe can be placed against the idea of God or, in other words, can be compared with God by contrast, which indicates that God is identical with the universe and the universe with God.[91] The vastness and most likely the infinity of the universe points to the infinity of God and, in this particular respect, God is merged with the reality of the universe itself. God begins where the universe begins and ceases to exists where the universe ceases to exists; to be sure, God and the universe exist in and for each other, so the idea of universality as attached to God has a clear material starting point in both Hegel and Baur. At the same time, the notion of spirituality and the spirit seem to have the same material foundation in the universality and infinity of the physical universe. Resuming the idea of faith, Baur points to the fact that it is explained through man's awareness that Christ can be compared with the truth which lives in and for itself and which is revealed through the process of life. The truth of life or the veracity of reality which can be seen through the unfolding of human life in the materiality of the physical world is revealed in the historical person of Christ.

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[88] Details about the idea of faith as applied to Christianity in Hegel can be found in Andrew Shanks, *Hegel and Religious Faith. Divided Brain, Atoning Spirit* (London: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2011), 87ff.

[89] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 296.

[90] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 87.

[91] Compare Peter Singer, *Hegel. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, reprinted 2001), 106–108.

When it comes to the actual life of Christ, it seems that Baur—based on Hegel—is much more interested in his death, than in his existence as a human being. This is why he writes that the death of Christ is the touchstone or the criterion based on which faith itself can be preserved. Thus, faith finds its most powerful argument not in Christ's life but rather in his death because it is his death that reveals the humanity of Christ in a way which makes it similar to the humanity of every human being. Christ's death shows that he was the God-man, but the meaning of this conviction is that not only that Christ was the God-man; on the contrary, based on the fact that Christ was the God-man as well as on the revelation that in Christ the connection between God and man was made crystal clear, one can and should conclude that every individual person can be compared to and is in fact a Christ or a God-man.[92]

This is confirmed by Baur's conviction that Christ's death is the best proof of "absolute finitude", which points to the fact that negation does exist in God and God himself—or rather the idea of God—is preserved in this process of life, which ends in death.[93] The very process of live which ends in death is, as Hegel shows, the "death of death"[94] or "the negation of negation",[95] the proof that God appears to humanity exactly in the existence of the human being which finds death because it is only in finding the meaning of life through accepting the awareness of death that the idea of God is able to kill the anguish of death itself:[96]

> Now, however, a further determination comes into play—God has died, God is dead—this is the most frightful of all thoughts, that all that is eternal, all that is true is not, that negation itself is found in God; the deepest sorrow, the feeling of something completely irretrievable, the renunciation of everything of a higher kind, are connected with this. The course of thought does not, however, stop short here; on the contrary, thought begins to retrace its steps: God, that is to say, maintains himself in the

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[92] See also Simon Critchley, *The Book of Dead Philosophers* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 194–195.

[93] See Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel. Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic* (London: Routledge, 2005), xliii.

[94] For more details about the "death of death" in Hegel, see Christopher M. Gemerchak, *The Sunday of the Negative. Reading Bataille, Reading Hegel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 37.

[95] More information about Hegel's "negation of negation" can be found in Nicholas Churchich, *Marxism and Alienation* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990), 286.

[96] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 300.

> process, and the latter is only the death of death. God comes to life again, and thus things are reversed.[97]

God is simply the awareness which helps the human being fight the necessity of finitude, humanity, and humiliation as realities which alienate man from himself; in this context, man's fight against the necessity of death is what Hegel means by the "negation of negation", a "divine" feature which helps man's self-consciousness against the implacability of death.[98] Baur knows that, in Hegel, the idea of God shows that finitude was assumed by the other, which is Christ, so finitude can be contrasted with the idea of God which is to be found in Christ; the result of this comparison is that finitude can be explained through man's "being-for-himself", which was countered through the life and death of Christ.[99] Christ lived for others and he died for the truth in which he believed, so his rectitude of life shows that the idea of sin must be understood as opposition to God, as a sharp contrast with Christ's willingness to live for others. "Being-for-himself" is sin; living for others is God's will; it is exactly what Christ did and in so doing he managed to kill man's finitude.

Christ fought against human finitude through his own death and by showing that man's most fundamental "being-for-himself" can be turned into living for others. Baur is convinced that the finitude of humanity was destroyed through Christ's death and this is the true religious awareness of the human spirit. In other words, Christ's death not only reveals that finitude can be defeated, but also that the innermost meaning of finitude is sin. The idea of sin finds its true significance in man's finitude and, in Baur, fighting finitude is fighting sin.[100] Through Christ's death, it was not only finitude which was defeated, but also the reality of sin which was annihilated. The world can be said to have been reconciled because sin was considerably decreased as a result of Christ's death, which of course is not only a death in itself but also a model for every human being.[101]

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[97] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 91.

[98] Compare Vassilios Paipais, "Self and Other in Critical International Theory: Assimilation, Incommensurability, and the Paradox of Critique", 121–140, in *Review of International Studies* 37.1 (2011): 125.

[99] See also Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God. A Theological Genealogy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 31.

[100] In this respect, Baur's argument seems to run against Hegel, who believes that finitude should not be placed at the same level with sin. See, for details, Robert R. Williams, *Recognition. Fichte and Hegel on the Other* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 250, n. 109.

[101] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 694–695.

The most important aspect which, following Hegel, Baur attempts to highlight here is that death can have a meaning for the human being.[102] The death of Christ assuredly has a certain meaning and, since the death of Christ appears to have the capacity to be somehow applied to every human being, it means that humanity in its entirety is able to grasp the meaning of Christ's death and appropriate it for each individual member thereof.[103] Christ's death has a certain significance which points to the fact that material history can be understood in a spiritual way; this is why Baur—following in Hegel's footsteps—writes that the subject, the human subject, is able to comprehend its individual alienation when he fully understands the real meaning of Christ's death. Christ took upon himself human alienation from itself and he clothed himself with humanity; what his death, however, managed to accomplish was to nullify or annihilate both man's alienation and the humanity which shelters it.[104]

When human individuals realize this truth, this extremely powerful idea, namely that the meaning of Christ death can be appropriated individually and, in so doing, each person is able to shun his or her own alienation, then what happens is that the community begins to take shape and, for Baur, the community is in "the spirit" because Hegel says so:[105]

> (…) Only when the spirit has taken up its abode in the church [or community], when it is immediate, believing spirit, and raises itself to the stage of thought, that the idea reaches perfection. We are interested in considering the workings or ferment of this idea, and in learning to recognize what lies at the basis of the marvelous manifestations which occur.[106]

It is the spirit which was revealed to humanity through Christ and his death since the totality of the individuals who understand the true meaning of Christ's death and its capacity to annihilate human alienation make up a community that has a different "spirit". All these individuals understand that humanity can be transformed and changed through "the spirit", namely through his new understanding that materiality can be perceived in a spiritual way, that human life can be seen in new terms through the spiritual understanding of Christ's death,[107] which in Hegel and then in Baur means that faith must rise to the level of reason if one intends to understand the idea that Christ's death can be meaningful to a whole community.

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[102] For details about the meaning of death in Hegel, see Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 343.

[103] See also Frederick C. Beiser, *Hegel* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 137–138.

[104] Compare Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 2 (London: Continuum, 2004), 434–435.

[105] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 242.

[106] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 28.

Consequently, in Hegel and Baur, humanity is totally transformed through "the spirit" in such a way that God's nature is now able to open up to humanity once Christ's death has been apprehended and comprehended for its true, real spiritual significance which is the destruction of self-alienation and meaninglessness. Death is seen therefore in a totally new light; now it has meaning, it shows that alienation can be destroyed and humanity is able to perceive itself in a spiritual way. Death is the transition to man's original glory, the image of spiritual humanity which is given—in religious and theological terms—by the history of Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father.[108]

This is in fact the new spiritual understanding of history which Baur sees in Hegel; in other words, the belief that Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father means that the materiality of history, and that of the physical existence of the human being in nature, can be seen through the spiritual lens of religion as the destruction of alienation and the acceptance of a totally spiritual perspective on life. When this happens, the individual human being comprehends that history is the *locus* for his spiritual transformation in the sense that the new religious or spiritual awareness that he acquires as a result of seeing Christ's death as the destruction of self-alienation proves eventually that the idea of God has a powerful assurance attached to it, which in theology translates as faith.[109] Man is sure about the reality of the idea of God; God—as an idea—becomes a certain fact for the individual because this is the spirit at work. Man understands that he is the spirit who works through the unfolding of the process of history and existence in the material world.[110]

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[107] The death of Christ reveals that man's fragility is united with God's divinity; they are, in fact, one single reality which now, despite the negativity of death, confers meaning to the actual reality of death. In other words, the death of Christ, discloses not only that Christ is the God-man, but also that each human being is a God-man. See, for instance, Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted, *Philosophy of Understanding* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, first published 1985), 181. Compare Lewis, *Religion, Modernity, and Politics in Hegel*, 219.

[108] For details about Christ's resurrection in Hegel, see Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self. A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 28.

[109] For more information about the connection between Christ's resurrection and faith in Hegel, see Stephen Houlgate, "Religion, Morality, and Forgiveness in Hegel's Philosophy", 81–110, in William Desmond, Ernst-Otto Onnasch, and Paul Cruysberghs (eds.), *Philosophy and Religion in German Idealism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 95–96.

Baur understands that, in Hegel, what transforms man so powerfully that he is able to see himself as the spirit is the idea of God and the reality of death; God and death give meaning to the idea of the spirit which can be appropriated by each individual in a meaningful way. Man understands that his existence is based on himself since he is the spirit, but at the same time he exists for himself because the idea of God allows him to perceive himself as the spirit. It is now that man realizes what the Trinity really means: the idea of God as Trinity points to diversity and even to stages of awareness because man is able to understand not only that he is the spirit but also that history is in fact God's history or, to be precise, history belongs to humanity when humanity is able to understand that the idea of God helps individuals see themselves in spiritual terms. Man is thus able to switch from the certainty of senses to the spiritual awareness of him being the spirit. Thus, the idea of God becomes practically implemented in a community of people who share the same spiritual perspective on the world and their material existence in the world; this is the community of the spirit. The transition from senses to the spirit, from materiality to spirituality takes place in the community. As Hegel explains and Baur does not fail to notice, the community is the empirical subject which finds itself in "the spirit of God", a God that lives in a community where the spirit expresses itself in love:[111]

> Love is spirit as such, the holy spirit. It is in [believers], and they are and constitute the universal Christian church, the communion of saints. Spirit is infinite return into self, infinite subjectivity, not Godhead conceived of in ideas, but the real present Godhead, and thus it is not the substantial potentiality of the Father, not the true in the objective or antithetical form of the son, but the subjective present and real, which, just because it is subjective, is present, as estrangement into that objective, sensuous representation of love and of its infinite sorrow, and as return, in that mediation. This is the spirit of God, or God as present, real spirit, God dwelling in his church [or community].[112]

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[110] In other words, in Hegel, the resurrection of Christ speaks about the unity between divinity and humanity, the unity between man and the spirit. See, for details, Carl G. Vaught, *The Quest for Wholeness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 166–168.

[111] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 314–315.

[112] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 107.

In other words, the understanding that the idea of God helps man see himself as a spiritual being who is no longer afraid of death but rather embraces it as the true way to pure spirituality takes shape in individuals and the totality of these individuals form a spiritual community which finds meaning in seeing the material world through the lens of spirituality. The idea of community then is strongly connected with the idea of God and the idea of the spirit; what is important to realize though is that both God and the spirit as ideas refer to the materiality of the human being and its existence within history.[113] It is the human being who is able to see itself as God and as spirit; when more individuals sharing the same perspective get together the idea of community emerges in a practical way in the reality of history, which consequently becomes "God's history", the history which is indwelled by the "spirit of God".[114]

The concept of community is, by definition, practical in Baur as he points out that, according to Hegel before him, the community finds its full realization in the church.[115] The church is the community of those who understand the historicity of Christ as well as the meaning of his life and death. The church is a real community which exists within the reality of history and promotes a specific teaching about its ecclesiastical features, the most important of which seem to be the dissemination of truth.[116] The most significant task of the church as a disseminator of truth is to bring the human subjects towards and eventually into the actuality, as well as the reality, of the truth. Baur speaks next of the two sacraments which, as in Hegel, count for the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, as instrumental for the implementation of truth within the lives of the human subjects, an idea which is congruent with Hegel's presentation of the two realities of Protestant (specifically Lutheran) sacramental theology.[117]

The church expresses itself through the sacraments and when it comes to baptism, the church points to the fact that the human being is born in a community—man is born in the church once he adheres to the truth that it promotes concerning the historicity of Christ and the meaning of his life and death.[118] Man is born in the community of the church through baptism, which also means that he finds himself in a community which witnesses not only to the new birth of humanity, but also to the reconciliation of God with himself, which—in Baur's Hegelian hermeneutics—discloses man's reconciliation with himself[119] by accepting the meaningfulness of Christ's death and thus rejecting his self-alienation, as Hegel points out:[120]

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[113] Compare Timothy C. Luther, *Hegel's Critique of Modernity. Reconciling Individual Freedom and the Community* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009, reprinted 2010), 44.

[114] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 697–698.

[115] See also John McTaggart and Ellis McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, first printed 1901), 210.

[116] Compare Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979, reprinted 1998), 193–194.

[117] Compare Vincent A. McCarthy, *Quest for a Philosophical Jesus. Christianity and Philosophy in Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Schelling* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 152–155.

> Since the individual is thus born in the church, he is forthwith destined, although, to be sure, unconsciously, to share in this truth and to become a partaker of it; he is destined for this truth. The church expresses this in the sacrament of baptism, man is in the fellowship of the church, in which evil is essentially, in-and-for-itself, overcome, and God is essentially, or in-and-for-himself, reconciled. Baptism shows that the child has been born in the fellowship of the church, not in sin and misery; that he has not come into a hostile world, but that the church is his world, and that he has only to train himself in the spiritual community which already actually exists as representing his worldly condition. Man must be born twice, once naturally, and then spiritually (...). Spirit is not immediate, it exists only in so far as it brings itself out of itself; it exists only as a regenerate spirit.[121]

The other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, indicates that a specific religious awareness is given to man in a descriptive way; this awareness though speaks of man's conviction that he can be reconciled with God in the spirit.[122] In other words, the Lord's Supper shows how man becomes aware of the actuality of the reconciliation with God through accepting the meaningfulness of Christ and rejecting his innate alienation.[123] Baur underlines the reality of the community of the church and also that those who form the church, the human subjects, are all supposed to become fully aware of their actuality in the materiality of the world. This is a religious awareness which can be understood exclusively in spiritual terms; this is why, those who have this awareness, the spiritual ones, must find a way to "realize" themselves in light of the actuality of history. According to Baur, this cannot be done without the transformation and the reformation of the church as community. The ideas of transformation and reformation imply the spiritual conversion of the human subject to accepting and embracing the reality of the world according to the meaning which is conveyed upon it by the death of Christ. This is true spirituality, and true spirituality develops deep within the community itself "in the spirit", as Hegel says.[124]

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[118] In Hegel, therefore, man acquires a new humanity through baptism, based on the reality of the spirit. See, for details, Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 214.

[119] Hegel's philosophical and religious understanding of the new birth and reconciliation can also have a political counterpart translated as revolution. See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Religion, Revolution, and the Rise of Modern Nationalism: Reflections on the American Experience", 492–504, in *Church History* 44.4 (1975): 493–494.

[120] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 333.

[121] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 128.

[122] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 338–339.

[123] More details about Hegel's view of the Lord's Supper in Bernard M.G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism. Studies in Early Nineteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, reprinted 1989), 78–79.

Baur seems to point here to the non-material constitution of the human being and especially of those who make up the church as a spiritual community. This is why the reality of human feelings and sentiments cannot be excluded from religious awareness, but while coming to terms with their feelings, the human subjects must never lose sight of the fact that the church as community has a historical, material, and worldly existence. Thus, in the church, the human subjects deal with both materiality and spirituality, namely with the materiality of their physical existence in the world and the spirituality of their religious awareness. According to Baur, who builds on Hegel, the church seems to be the *locus* which accepts the separation and differentiation between the divine objective idea[125] and human religious awareness,[126] concepts which are closely associated with Hegel's philosophy. The idea of alterity or otherness is important within this particular context because, while the divine objective idea seems to be fully a rational construct, the religious awareness is shaped more by man's existence in the reality of the material world. The two realities—the divine objective idea or the idea of God and man's religious awareness—meet though within the equally important reality of man's feeling which develops and becomes disseminated in the world.[127]

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[124] In Hegel, true spirituality has an obvious ethical component. See Richard Schacht, "Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and the Future of Self-Alienation", 1–16, in Felix Geyer and Walter R. Heinz (eds.), *Alienation, Society, and the Individual. Continuity and Change in Theory and Research* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 15.

[125] See also Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Transformations in Consciousness. The Metaphysics and Epistemology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 122, and G.W.F. Hegel, "Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion", 172–259, in Peter C. Hodgson (ed.), *G.W.F. Hegel, Theologian of the Spirit* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 253.

[126] For religious awareness in Hegel, see Nicholas Boyle, *Who Are We Now? Christian Humanism and the Global Market from Hegel to Heaney* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998, reprinted 2000), 89–90.

Religion develops throughout history as a result of the work of the community of the church, and this happens because the church is able to perceive itself as God's kingdom,[128] a concept which in Hegel is described through the idea of love.[129] However, the profound spirituality of the community of the church, expressed through love, must face the objectivity of the world; in other words, the interiority of the church's spirituality has to confront the exteriority of the world's materiality. The church must face the world, spirituality has to confront materiality, but the materiality of the world can be expressed through non-material interests such as "the heart", "reflection", "abstract thought or reason", and "concepts". It seems that in Baur, who refuses to deflect from Hegel, the church is supposed to confront the world in all these aspects; religion is primarily concerned with the heart and it can reconcile man's worldly spirituality of the heart with Christ's divine spirituality. Nevertheless, in order for the reality of reconciliation to become truly functional for the human being, the church must face all the non-material aspects of the world.

The church is, therefore, supposed to deal with the worldliness of physical existence in the world and explain it in a meaningful way through the historicity and meaningfulness of Christ. The confrontation between the church and the world, or between spirituality and materiality, can be achieved in three ways: first, through unmediated reconciliation when the spiritual reality renounces the reality of the world, so there is some sort of negative relationship between spirituality and materiality,[130] in which the church is a community that keeps reconciliation with God as abstract principle away from the worldliness of society; second, unification of spirituality and materiality, in which the church is permeated by a spiritless worldliness that becomes the ruling principles of the spiritual community; and third, which—in line with Hegel—Baur calls "true reconciliation" and through which divinity finds its realization in the realm of worldliness and materiality, and this is the moral/ethical and legal life of the state, as seen in Hegel.[131] In other words, true religious awareness must be connected with the ethical and juridical existence of the political state or the commonwealth[132] as manifestation of human freedom.[133]

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[127] Details about Hegel's notion of feeling can be found in David V. Ciavatta, *Spirit, the Family, and the Unconscious in Hegel's Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 121ff.

[128] For more details about Hegel's view of the kingdom of God, compare Robert Stern, *G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel's Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit* (London: Routledge, 1983, reprinted 2001), 473.

[129] See Alice Ormiston, "'The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate': Towards a Reconsideration of the Role of Love in Hegel", 499–525, in *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 35.3 (2002): 515.

[130] In Hegel, negativity is the essence of philosophy since the negation of an affirmation is what provides endless questions to seemingly self-evident answers. See also Fiona Ellis, "On the Dismounting of Seesaws", 31–54, in *Philosophy* 76.1 (2001): 52.

Following Hegel's argument, Baur promotes the objectivity of reflection,[134] which is ideally the real state of mind that describes the person who benefits from the reconciliation of the spirit.[135] The human individual who managed to accomplish the reconciliation with God, and consequently with his own self, is a spiritual person that is now able to use his capacity of reflection in an objective way.[136] Having destroyed his self-alienation through the acceptance of Christ's meaningful death, he or she is now capable of producing objective thoughts because his interiority can exist for himself and by himself. When this state of mind is fully realized, one can speak about free thinking or, as Baur puts it, about the Hegelian notion of the freedom of reason,[137] which turns against pure spiritual outwardness that seems to be a form of slavery. It is not very clear what Baur means by pure spiritual outwardness or by slavery for that matter, but it seems that he equates them with some sort of "abstract thinking"[138]—another Hegelian product—which fights against the concrete content of the church. Thus, the abstractness of pure spiritual outwardness appears to be related to any religious thought which does not result in the material constitution of the church as community. The abstract thinking of pure spiritual outwardness or of religions which are not connected with the concreteness and the materiality of the church as community may have a principle of identity that results in some concrete forms of historical manifestations, but its main problem is the lack of awareness concerning the complex reality of the human being[139] characterized by a rationality that understands the notion of an "absolute idea".[140]

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[131] Alongside family and civil society, the state is one of the "moments of ethical life" in Hegel. See Hans-Martin Jaeger, "Hegel's Reluctant Realism and the Transnationalisation of Civil Society", 497–517, in *Review of International Studies* 28.3 (2002): 502.

[132] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 698–699.

[133] See also Ayșe Zarakol, "What Makes Terrorism Modern? Terrorism, Legitimacy, and the International System", 1–26, in *Review of International Studies* 37.5 (2011): 9.

[134] For a critical insight into Hegel's objectivity of reflection performed from Kierkegaard's standpoint, which advocates the complementary need for interiority and subjectivity, see Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity. From Kierkegaard to Camus* (London: Routledge, 1995), 46. A useful analysis of the objectivity of reflection in German Idealism with specific reference to Fichte is Nectarios Limnatis, *German Idealism and the Problem of Knowledge: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel* (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 87ff.

[135] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 261.

[136] For an interesting discussion about how Hegel's ideas of reconciliation and reflection influenced German national culture and society, see Thomas Armbrüster, *Management and Organization in Germany* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 40. See also Christopher Yeomans, *Freedom and Reflection. Hegel and the Logic of Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22.

[137] See Franco Chiereghin, "Freedom and Thought: Stoicism, Skepticism, and Unhappy Consciousness", 55–71, in Kenneth R. Westphal (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 63.

Such abstract religious thinking, which is based on pure spiritual outwardness, is based on the conviction that everything concrete or material is cancelled "in God"; in other words, the idea of God, the theoretical, purely spiritual, idea of God is much more important than any material existences or things. While remaining in the close vicinity of Hegel's thought, Baur seems to imply that such religions, while promoting the superiority of spirituality and divinity, ignore the materiality of man's physical existence in the world, which ends in the denial of the very essence of what the spirit entails. Such religions claim that God cannot be fully known since he exists beyond any materiality whatsoever, so pure spirituality is belief in God's exclusive spiritual existence as totally detached from concreteness. As far as Baur is concerned—and this sounds Hegelian as well—this is pure subjectivity, and it wrongly promotes the idea that man is good from nature and, in doing so, such religious thought denies the objectivity of God which is seen in the objectivity of the human being.

Thus, this type of religious thinking not only denies God's objectivity, but also the objectivity of the spirit as a subsistent reality of man's existence in the material world; for this kind of religious philosophy, Baur contends based on

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[138] Compare Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism. A Critical Study* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 60, and Joseph C. Flay, "Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Ironies of the Understanding", 153–170, in George di Giovanni (ed.), *Essays on Hegel's Logic* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 153, n. 1.

[139] This is most likely why, in Hegel, the absolute idea, which is essentially characterized by inwardness, needs to find its way towards outwardness. See J.N. Findlay, "Hegel and Whitehead on Nature", 155–166, George R. Lucas, Jr. (ed.), *Hegel and Whitehead. Contemporary Perspectives on Systematic Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986), 157.

[140] See also Brenda Almond, "Idealism and Religion in the Philosophy of T.L.S. Sprigge", 531–549, in *Philosophy* 85.4 (2010): 536.

Hegel, God is the absolute One as in Islamic thought.[141] His next step is to contrast this sort of religious thought with the religion that is based on the idea, but also the historicity of Christ. To be sure, Baur highlights that, in Christ, spirituality is no longer abstract; on the contrary, it develops into a concrete form, especially through the idea of the Trinity, which is also used by Hegel to convey its capacity to represent religiously the absolute character of conceptual truth as it exists in nature.[142] Reading Christology through Hegel's spectacles, Baur writes that knowing Christ through the idea of the Trinity means that Christ must be accepted "as spirit", or as the embodiment of the idea and the accompanying reality of the objectivity of God which is manifested "as spirit" in the materiality and concreteness of Christ's existence in the physical world of history.[143]

While accepting the evident dualism of Christ, who couples spirituality with materiality both as an idea and as a historical person, Baur appears to reject any religious thought that dismisses dualism or, more exactly, the dualism between spirit and matter. This is why he points out that there are two extremes in the progress of the community—both specific to Hegel's discourse—which may be a hint at the development of the church through history. First, he mentions the lack of freedom, which is the slavery of the spirit "in the absolute religion of freedom",[144] and second, he points to what he calls "abstract subjectivity"[145] or subjective freedom devoid of content, in full agreement with Hegel:[146]

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[141] For further reading about Hegel's idea of the "absolute One", see Lewis P. Hinchman, *Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment* (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1984), 44.

[142] For details, see John W. Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers. From Plato to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 113–116.

[143] The same line of argument, from Christ to the spirit and then to the concreteness of the contingent human person, can be found in Hegel. See John Walker, "Comment on the Article by Walter Jaeschke" [Walter Jaeschke, "The History of Religion and the Absolute Religion", 9–31], in John Walker (ed.), *Thought and Faith in the Philosophy of Hegel* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 33.

[144] For details about "the absolute religion of freedom" in Hegel, see J.R. Siebert, "Christianity as Absolute or Relative Religion. From Hegel to Horkheimer, Benjamin, Adorno, and Habermas", 108–130, in Andreas Arndt, Karol Bal, Wilhelm R. Beyer (eds.), *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, zweiter Teil [Hegel Jahrbuch 2002] (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 116.

[145] See, for details, Jennifer Ring, *Modern Political Theory and Contemporary Feminism. A Dialectical Analysis* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 137. Compare Kevin Thompson, "Fragmentation, Contamination, Systematicity: The Threats of Representation and the Immanence of Thought", 35–54, in Jere O'Neill Surber (ed.), *Hegel and Language* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 52.

[146] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 207–208, and 375.

> The absolute religion is thus the religion of truth and freedom. For truth means that the mind does not take up such an attitude to the objective as would imply that this is something foreign to it. Freedom brings out the real meaning of truth, and gives it a specific character by means of negation. Spirit is for Spirit; that expresses its nature, and it is thus its own presupposition (…) The main idea which in a popular form expresses the truth, is that of the unity of the divine and human natures; God has become man […] In the opposition of the process of knowledge to the object to be known lies the finiteness of knowledge. But this opposition is not on that account to be regarded as itself infinite and absolute, and its products are not to be taken to be appearances only because of the mere abstraction of subjectivity; but in so far as they themselves are determined by that opposition, the content as such is affected by the externality referred to.[147]

Although he does not explain what he means by either, it is nonetheless clear that both extremes avoid the dualism between matter and spirit. For Baur, religion exists in history and it deals with the human being; consequently, all concepts which pertain to religious thought (regardless of how purely spiritual they may first appear) must embrace both the pure spirituality of divinity and the evident materiality of humanity as of the means to understanding and freedom. In other words, and Baur follows Hegel in this respect as well, history is a movement towards freedom based on the correct, rational, understanding of religion as philosophy,[148] which dismisses reductionist approaches to the reality of the spirit. Thus, the two religious extremes must be avoided at all costs not only because they deny the materiality of humanity as necessary counterpart for the spirituality of divinity, but also because they lack the very content of spiritual insight.

To be more exact, true religion must, according to Baur, find a way to promote a subjectivity which is able to develop its content from itself, without being conditioned by anything.[149] This must be done by necessity, which—Baur insists—is the starting point of philosophy. Religion therefore is that kind of philosophy which is capable not only of providing content for man's subjectivity, but also of doing this by necessity. It seems that the idea of necessity in

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[147] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 316–317, and volume 3, 170.

[148] See Paolo Magagnoli, "Critical Nostalgia in the Art of Joachim Koester", 97–121, in *Oxford Art Journal* 34.1 (2011): 100.

[149] Compare Jeffrey P. Bishop, "Transhumanism, Metaphysics, and the Posthuman God", 700–720, in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 35.6 (2010): 704.

Baur—and this can be traced back to Hegel—is intrinsically connected with the reality of the material world, or with the actuality of matter as it exists in the world.[150] Matter gives concreteness to necessity, so the human being is religious by necessity, in the sense that it must find meaning in the necessity of what appears to be meaningless; religious philosophy, therefore, makes sense of the meaninglessness of the material world, as in Hegel.[151] As matter is meaningless, what can confer meaning to the concreteness of matter is the spirituality of divinity, which shows once more that dualism, for Baur, appears to be some sort of philosophical necessity that provides religion with rational explanations of the spirituality of divinity. The content of religion or of religious philosophy for that matter is inextricably linked with the concept, which is constantly maintained active through thought and reason; reason, therefore, seems to be essentially concrete for Baur which works again with a Hegelian concept.[152] Reason is not all about abstract thought or definitions; reason is concrete because it works with concepts which produce "the truth", so the content of spirituality must be recognized as producing truth for itself and by itself.[153] In other words, religion is the philosophy which finds a way to explain the relevance of the idea of truth based on the subjectivity of the human individual who uses his reason as the most objective tool of his material existence. Truth is therefore contextual, or confined to the materiality of the physical world, and is constantly informed by man's use of reason in order to find spiritual meaning for his material existence in the world.[154] In a word, Baur's proposition is to have philosophy blended with religion in an attempt to offer a more rational understanding of both, especially of the latter.

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[150] See also Joseph Margolis, "The Point of Hegel's Dissatisfaction with Kant", 12–39, in Angelica Nuzzo (ed.), *Hegel and the Analytic Tradition* (London: Continuum, 2010), 27.

[151] See Richard Shusterman, "The Pragmatist Aesthetics of William James", 347–361, in *British Journal of Aesthetics* 51.4 (2011): 357.

[152] For details about Hegel's idea of concrete reason, see John Russon, *Reading Hegel's Phenomenology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 196.

[153] Compare Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics. The Adventures of Immanence*, Volume 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989, reprinted 1992), 34.

[154] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 699–700.

CHAPTER 5

The Connection between Philosophy and Religion

The Correlation of Philosophy and Religion as Interpenetration of Humanity and Divinity

The second lesson Baur learns from Hegel is the connection between philosophy and religion. Concretely, the fact that the concept produces truth is the objective standpoint or the justification of philosophy according to Baur, who evidently reaches this conclusion through Hegel's understanding of philosophy and religion, as well as of the relationship between them.[1] Philosophy points to the rationality of religion and, in so doing, it also helps religion achieve its justification based on rational awareness.[2] In other words, religion cannot be properly understood without the idea of rational awareness which is specific to philosophy.[3] This is why Baur's conclusion entails that philosophy is religion and religion is philosophy or, regarding the concept of God, philosophy is theology and theology is philosophy since the reconciliation of God with himself and nature is the very object of theology or religion, and theology or religion—as Hegel underlines—can only be expressed through a clear rational awareness that is specific to philosophy:[4]

> (...) In so far as thought begins to place itself in opposition to the concrete, the process of thought then consists in carrying through this opposition until it reaches reconciliation. This reconciliation is philosophy; so far philosophy is theology, it sets forth the reconciliation of God himself and with nature, and shows that nature, other-being is divine, that it partly belongs to the very nature of finite spirit to rise into the state of reconciliation, and that it partly reaches this state of reconciliation in the history of the world.[5]

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[1] See Merigala Daniel, *Subjectivity and Religious Truth in the Philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 132.

[2] Also check Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation. Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1995), 18–19.

[3] Compare Peter A. Redpath, *Masquerade of the Dream Walkers. Prophetic Theology from the Cartesians to Hegel* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), 178.

[4] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 354.

[5] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 149.

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Baur goes on by saying—with Hegel in mind—that nature, which is the concept that points to the materiality of the universe, is the otherness that exists in itself and should be seen in divine terms; nature is divine because it not only exists in itself but also points to the concept of God with which it stands in contrast through its otherness[6] and with which it must reconcile itself.[7] At the same time, nature must achieve this reconciliation with God through the developing process of world history as the only means whereby reconciliation with God can actually be reached.[8] Baur is not concerned with making a thorough evaluation of Hegel's philosophy of religion but he admits that his religious philosophy cannot be detached from his general understanding of philosophy.

What really gets Baur interested in this respect is the relationship between Hegel's religious philosophy and "the old Gnosis"; he wants to investigate the origin of Hegel's religious philosophy and the objections that can be raised concerning his understanding of religion through the rationality of philosophy. This is why Baur writes that the most controversial aspect concerning Hegel's religious philosophy is the premise of his religious philosophy, namely the fact that God cannot be conceived without a certain "inner movement as spirit" or—as Hegel writes—"a conversion and transformation" which belongs to his being and is explained through the idea of Christ's reconciliatory death:[9]

> This is the signification of the death of Christ. Christ has borne the sin of the world, he has reconciled God to us as it is said. This death is thus at once finitude in its most extreme form, and at the same time the abolition and absorption of natural finitude, of immediate existence and estrangement, the canceling of limits. (…) The suffering and the sorrow connected with this death which contains this element of the reconciliation of spirit with itself and with what it potentially is, this negative moment which belongs to spirit only as spirit, is inner conversion and change.[10]

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[6] In Hegel, otherness seems to be defined by contrast and conflict. See Michael Szalay, "Ralph Ellison's Unfinished Second Skin", 795–827, in *American Literary History* 23.4 (2011): 820.

[7] See Alf H. Walle, *Exotic Visions in Marketing Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 28.

[8] For a critical position against Hegel's theory of reconciliation which does not differentiate between reconciliation with God and reconciliation with other human beings, see Joseph C. Flay, *Hegel's Quest for Certainty* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 394–395.

[9] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 302.

[10] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 93.

In other words, if God is seen as spirit, and if this spirit is defined as inner movement,[11] conversion or change, then God's being should be connected with the materiality of the universe, where the idea of movement makes sense.[12] Thus, God is a rational fact, which presents him as a living and concrete God and, quite obviously, this is an unveiled reference to the actuality of the human being in world history. At the same time, the fact that, in Hegel, God is presented by means of the actuality of humanity as a living and concrete reality, appears to be confirmed by what Baur believes to be Hegel's conviction that God can also be seen through the idea of process. If seen as process, God is the absolute spirit which is capable of mediating a relationship with himself,[13] which points again to the rationality and self-awareness of the human being[14] acting in freedom.[15] God is able to reveal himself, disclose his thoughts, rationality, and spirituality, and all these are features of the non-materiality of the human being.

What seems to be crucially important here is Baur's appropriation of Hegel's understanding of God through the more or less evident dualism which lies beneath it. God is both affirmative and negative in the sense that he can be presented simultaneously as a concrete being endowed with rationality and as a being that finds itself in total contrast with itself.[16] This is why the dialectical process of the idea of God[17] includes the notion of "the opponent", a reference to the negativity of God which in Baur seems to be some sort of separation within the very being of God. As far as Baur is concerned, this is an eternal separation, but God is also characterized by the cancellation of this separation since the idea of reconciliation is predicated as possible between God and himself on the one hand and between God and nature on the other. If God is able to reconcile with himself and nature, the idea of God's incarnation begins to make sense for Baur, given that God is in fact the human being[18] and, in its divine capacity, the human being—despite his own negativity and the negativity of the world wherein he lives[19]—is able to find reconciliation with itself and the context in which it develops its material existence.[20]

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[11] The idea of interiority is crucial for Baur in explaining the divine and human beings, although he does not seem interested in seeing how the human beings were understood in other religions. His main preoccupation is Hegel and it is from this perspective that he reads other religions. See also Hans Dieter Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (*ho esō anthrōpos*) in the Anthropology of Paul", 315–341, in *New Testament Studies* 46.3 (2000): 317, n. 9.

[12] See also Paul Redding, "Hegel, Idealism, and God. Philosophy as the Self-Correcting Appropriation of the Norms of Life and Thought", 133–152, in Paul Ashton, Toula Nicolacopoulos, and George Vassilacopoulos (eds.), *The Spirit of the Age. Hegel and the Fate of Thinking* (Melbourne: re.press, 2008), 134.

[13] In Hegel, God externalizes himself in Christ, who in turn is capable of internalization. In other words, as absolute spirit, God is capable of having a relationship with himself, and this image is represented by Christ. See also David James, "The Transition from Art to Religion in Hegel's Theory of Absolute Spirit", 265–286, in *Dialogue* 46.2 (2007): 281.

[14] Compare Claudia Welz, *Love's Transcendence and the Problem of Theodicy* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008), 74–75.

[15] See also Andrew W. Hass, "Artist Bound: The Enslavement of Art to the Hegelian Other", 379–392, in *Literature and Theology* 25.4 (2011): 384.

[16] This is true of the whole of reality in Hegel. See, for instance, James A. Good, "Rereading Dewey's 'Permanent Hegelian Deposit' ", 56–92, in John R. Shook, James A. Good (eds.), *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit, with the 1897 Lecture on Hegel* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2010), 70.

The idea of God and especially the incarnation of the idea of God are very important for Baur, because—as in Hegel—God speaks about humanity and humanity speaks about God.[21] A correct definition of God must include the notion of revelation and the fundamentals of revelation lie within the reality of incarnation.[22] In order for something to be revealed, that object must appear in a visible, sensible form, so God—which is traditionally invisible—must find a way to become visible to humanity in order for him to be perceived and consequently understood. This is why God becomes incarnate in Christ and human beings are thus able to see what God looks like in Christ.[23] God is, therefore, lowered to the level of humanity and it is humanity and its material existence which in fact explain what God is in reality. God's nature must be revealed in the materiality of the world so the definition of God must necessarily include the idea of revelation and, consequently, incarnation.[24] In Hegel and Baur, God must be subject to the factuality of materiality unless human beings want to pursue a meaningful picture of God and divinity.

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[17] In Baur, not only the idea of God, but theology and church history in general are seen as a dialectical process. See John B. Payne, "Schaff and Nevin, Colleagues at Mercersburg: The Church Question", 169–190, in *Church History* 61.2 (1992): 171.

[18] Historically, this is specific to Apollinarianism. See Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, erster Teil: Das Dogma der altern Kirche bis zur Synode von Chalcedon (Tübingen: Verlag von C.F. Osiander, 1841), 609ff.

[19] The same idea can be found in Hegel, who believes that the spirit (the human being) is capable of looking the negative "in the face"; see Sara Blair, "The Photograph's Last Word: Visual Culture Studies Now", 673–697, in *American Literary History* 22.3 (2010): 676.

[20] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 700–701.

[21] See Martin J. De Nys, *Hegel and Theology* (London: Continuum, 2009), 106.

[22] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 146.

[23] Compare Michael S. Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm. Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 53.

[24] See also Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), 137–138.

The revelation of God, however, must not be restricted to the factuality of materiality as confined exclusively to nature—such a definition of God would be mechanical; God must reveal himself through the factuality of the materiality which is expanded to include the human being as well as its spiritual constitution.[25] This way, God reveals himself through the materiality of humanity and especially through its spirituality. God can therefore be understood as nature and spirit, as a living God, as absolute spirit, because its definition comprises not only the factuality of nature's materiality, but also the spirituality of man's non-materiality. There is, therefore, a movement between materiality and spirituality which becomes a must for a proper definition of God as spirit or rather as absolute spirit.[26] God exists as an ego which lives for itself; it is the being-for-oneself, as well as a being-in-oneself which define the idea of God, very much in line with the reality of the human being.[27] Man is able to exist for himself and in himself, namely he subsists in his own being, and the definition of God must cling to this dualism of materiality and spirituality.[28]

Man is a material being which is aware of both his materiality and spirituality; God thus must display the same characteristics. The true God must exist for the spirit, which should also be true for the human being; man, therefore, must exist for the spirit because the materiality of his life is a given fact. Man, however, cannot and should not restrict his existence to his materiality; on the contrary, he should extend it and take it beyond what is material to what is non-material and spiritual. God must be conceived as a man, but it order for the definition of God to reach its fulfillment and, in so doing, to attain the higher level of awareness, one must think of God as a personal God who is able to create.[29] The image of God as creator resembles and, at the same time, is based on the reality of man's capacity to create, but one must understand that the idea of a personal God has nothing to do with the God of traditional theology, which believes in a personal God seen as an objectively real being. For Baur and Hegel, the existence of God as a being which is separated from man is unlikely. God can be seen as creator in as much as he is understood as man; God, however, cannot be understood as creator when his being is detached from the reality of the human being.[30] God must exist in nature and in the finite spirit—evidently the human being—otherwise it is unreasonable to assume, as Hegel shows, that God was spirit and life before creation or before nature. The proof in this respect is the reality of reason which, although capable of going beyond nature when conceived as spirit, exists nonetheless within nature and is able to understand God's revelation as spirit because man himself is spirit:[31]

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[25] Also read Quentin Lauer, S.J., *Essays in Hegelian Dialectic* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 1977), 97.

[26] See Eric O. Clarke, "Fetal Attraction. Hegel's An-aesthetics of Gender", 149–176, in Patricia Jagentowicz Mills (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 153–154.

[27] For further details about Hegel's idea of ego, see Leo Rauch, "A Discussion of the Text", 55–162, in Leo Rauch and David Sherman (eds.), *Hegel's Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness. Text and Commentary* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 94.

[28] For an opposing view, see Stephen Theron, *Unboundedly Rational Religion. Thinking the Inheritance* (San Francisco, CA: Grin Publishing, 2007), 276, and Kenneth N. Addison, *"We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident…". An Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Roots of Racism and Slavery in America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), 64.

> The nature of reason is rather the notion or conception of reason. It belongs to the very essence of spirit to rise above nature. Natural reason in its true meaning is spirit, reason according to the notion, and this is in no kind of opposition to revealed religion. God, the spirit, can only reveal himself to spirit, to reason. (…) spirit (…) lived in unity with nature. (…) God reveals himself (…) in nature. (…) He can reveal himself to man only, who thinks and is spirit.[32]

God is neither spirit nor life without the reality of nature; so the existence and the spirituality of God can be said to exist and consequently be relevant only if connected to the reality of nature and of the human being. Nature, therefore, does not originate in a personal divine being which existed before creation itself; creation or nature stems from a chaotic power, a "dark, blind, and active source", which is not God but can be called God as time elapses and history unfolds through centuries.[33] God cannot be accepted as true if he is a God who turns to himself from his own externalization. In other words, a correct definition of God cannot be based on the belief that God exists as a being that is separate from or external to the human being. Such a God can never be the true God, Baur contends, because his externalization cuts him off from the reality of man's material existence in the world. God cannot be God outside the world or the human being; this is why, in Baur—who only follows Hegel's line of thought—the reality of matter must be coupled with the equally important reality of the spirit as they meet in the human being whose material existence coincides with the physicality of nature.[34] God is truly God only in the world and in the human being; this is why the dualism of matter and spirit defines not only the idea of God, but also the reality of the human being. God is truly God when considered as the finite spirit of the human being who exists in the material context provided by the physical constitution of the world.[35]

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[29] See Chan Ho Park, *Transcendence and Spatiality of the Triune Creator* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 52.

[30] Man and God, therefore, share the capacity to create since, in Hegel, God is man and man is God; in other words, man and God share the same ontological being. Compare Daniel Berthold-Bond, *Hegel's Grand Synthesis. A Study of Being, Thought, and History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 123.

[31] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 263–264. See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 398.

[32] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 270–271, and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 195.

Given the idea of the externalization of God, which is also found in Hegel,[36] it seems that Baur is willing to accept that divine awareness coincides, to some degree, with the reality of nature and especially of human nature. This indicates that divine nature and human nature share subjectivity, so the unity between man and God is made possible within man's reason which thinks about the idea of absolute spirit, as Hegel writes:[37]

> (…) this subjectivity which belongs to human nature exists in God himself. Infinite sorrow must come to be conscious of this implicit being as the implicit unity of divine and human nature, but only in its character as implicit being or substantiality, and in such a way that this finitude, this weakness, this other-being, in no way impairs the substantial unity of the two. The unity of divine and human nature, man in his universality, is the thought of man, and the idea of absolute spirit in-and-for-itself.[38]

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[33] Compare Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction. A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 71.

[34] See also Michael C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History. A Guide for Students* (London: Routledge, 2003), 214.

[35] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 701–702.

[36] Compare Sanford Lakoff, *Ten Political Ideas that Have Shaped the Modern World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), 120.

[37] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 281.

[38] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 71–72.

This is why he points out that divine awareness is fragmented, but at the same time collective and organized in various degrees, from the dullness of beasts to the speculative thought of human reason. The entire creation, which is material nature in its full physicality, is equated with the externalization of God's being.[39] God's being becomes externalized in nature and the finite spirit; in other words, as far as the externalization of God is concerned, that encompasses the whole material reality of the world, namely nature and the human being. Conversely, the materiality of nature and of the human being points to the reality of God's externalization, so God can be seen in both nature and the human being.[40] God's being exists forever through the dialectical process which includes the movement from matter to spirit; moreover, going through the various degrees of awareness, from animal awareness to human reason, is also proof of the process which points to God's existence in the material world.[41]

The real issue here—and Baur seems to be aware of it—is how much importance can be ascribed to nature when it comes to the definition of God. On the one hand, one has the finitude of nature which indicates God's existence as a finite spirit in humanity, so religious awareness or divine awareness in this case is strictly limited to the materiality of nature.[42] On the other hand, one could envisage the infinitude of human thought, which can be believed to transcend even human materiality, in which case religious awareness is somewhat idealized and consequently seen as philosophical awareness, with the end result that divine awareness is not limited to the materiality of nature but rather "confined" to the infinity of philosophical thought.[43] Baur is concerned to see which of the two theories is accepted by Hegel, so he makes sure that he contrasts them in a way which is supposed to highlight Hegel's idea more prominently. Baur is convinced that the idea of a personal God, which presupposes that God is the absolute in which nothing happens randomly or accidentally, has nothing to do with Hegel's thought and, moreover, opposes Hegel's understanding of divinity. As far as Baur is concerned, Hegel promotes an idea of God which is based on the concept of freedom which is connected with the notion of necessity. Necessity, however—Hegel indicates—is nothing else but rationality, which shows that the spirit is a form of existence in nature:[44]

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[39] For an interesting discussion about the externalization of God in the Hegelian tradition, see Paul Ricoeur, "Thinking Creation", 31–70, in André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically. Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 66.

[40] Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being. A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 172.

[41] Compare Henry Jansen, *Relationality and the Concept of God* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 103.

[42] See also Wayne P. Pomerleau, *Twelve Great Philosophers. A Historical Introduction to Human Nature* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 321.

[43] See also Will Dudley, *Hegel, Nietzsche, and Philosophy. Thinking Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, reprinted 2004), 20.

> It is (…) the inner necessity of reason which shows itself active in thinking spirit. (…) [The] actions of the spirit, which we meet with in empirical reality, may in some degree serve as an excuse for conceiving of the idea of spirit as something which breaks up into faculties, capacities, activities, and the like; for it is as an individual form of existence, a definite single being, that it is this particular finite existence which is thus found in a separate form of existence external to itself, But it is God only who is this particular one, and only as he is this one is he God; thus subjective reality is inseparable from the idea, and consequently cannot be separated in itself.[45]

Reason, in this case, is thinking factuality; reason is the human faculty which orders everything, especially laws which are ordered according to the thinking capacities of the mind. In other words, Hegel's God must be understood as necessity, but it is not the necessity of the materiality of nature; it is the necessity of the materiality of reason.[46] Reason is material since it operates in the human brain, which is evidently part of man's material constitution. Materiality cannot be excluded from Baur's (and Hegel's) definition of God, and in this sense necessity is an idea which defines the very marrow of the idea of God. It is not the materiality of facts or nature which influences man's idea of God but rather the necessity of reason, which is capable of investigating the materiality of nature in a philosophical, rational, and sensible way.[47]

According to Baur, who again builds on Hegel, the idea of necessity must be interpreted as the very being of God but in a way in which the notion of fatalism should be excluded.[48] In other words, fatalism is not a feature of God's being, which means that the idea of necessity is not causally connected with the notion of fatalism. This can point to the fact that God should not be conceived as the absolute spirit which is, at the same time, the highest principle in the world.[49] If God is believed to be the absolute spirit and the highest principle, then it seems that fatalism is in place and Baur does not understand Hegel in these terms. The idea of absolute spirit and highest principle portrays the idea of God in an exclusively fatalistic and static way, while in Hegel—Baur contends—God is better explained by means of the notion of process.[50] Process implies movement, not a static reality, and movement defines the very reality of life. God must be conceived as life, as a living God who exists through a process based on the principle of absolute reason. God is conditioned necessarily by the nature of thought itself. The very notion of the Trinity points to the eternal process whereby God mediates himself and interacts with himself in a way which excludes abstraction and pure subjectivity from any definition of God that is to be found in Hegel.[51]

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[44] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 420.

[45] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 219, then 218.

[46] For details about the connection between reason and the idea of God in Hegel's philosophy, see David G. Leahy, *Novitas Mundi. Perception of the History of Being* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 131–132.

[47] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 702.

[48] See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 82.

The idea of God cannot lack an objective content; God must be conceived objectively because God cannot be detached from the reality of man's material existence in the world. As far as Baur is concerned, Hegel's definition of God can be checked against the contrary position which postulates the transfer of the thought forms of human reason on God's absolute being, in which case there is an unmediated identity between divine and human reason based on the idea of absolute reason.[52] If the identity between divine and human reason is accepted, then the idea of God as absolute reason becomes prominent, but the problem in this particular case resides in the fact that such definition of God is—according to Baur—highly subjective because the idea of God is devoid of any concreteness whatsoever. Consequently, God is seen as an abstract reality which transcends the material reality of man's physical existence in the world precisely because God is portrayed as the absolute reason that informs the contingent reason of the human being.[53] In this case the finite awareness of the human being is only a definite moment or manifestation of the absolute spirit, which subjects itself to the finitude of humanity.[54]

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[49] Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 114.

[50] The idea of process implies that God is connected to the reality of the human being—not immediately, however, but rather mediately. In other words, man can be said to be God through the mediation of the necessity with himself and the necessity within himself. See, for details, Robert C. Whittemore, "Hegel as Panentheist", 134–164, in Alan B. Brinkley (ed.), *Studies in Hegel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 138–139.

[51] For more details about Hegel's notion of Trinity as applied to God, see Samuel M. Powell, *The Trinity in German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 139–140.

[52] Compare Sean Cubitt, *Simulation and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publication, 2001), 30.

[53] Baur's view coincides with Hegel's perspective, which postulates the disconnection between material reality and a God conceived in traditional transcendental terms. See H. Tristam Engelhartd, Jr., "Christian Bioethics after Christendom: Living in a Secular Fundamentalist Polity and Culture", 64–95, in *Christian Bioethics* 17.1 (2011): 73.

The problem here seems to be that such a definition of God lacerates the objectivity of reality in the sense that God is seen as an objective being which is characterized by absolute reason, while humanity exists as another reality (severed from the reality of God) that is totally dependent on the transcendence of God's being.[55] Baur opposes such a view, and believes that Hegel does the same, because man's reason is presented as finite and consequently dependent on God's absolute reason.[56] This perspective not only affirms man's materiality, which Hegel and Baur fully endorse, but also postulates God's non-materiality, abstractness, and absoluteness, which neither Hegel nor Baur seem willing to accept. At the same time, both Hegel and Baur seem to dismiss the idea of God's self-awareness as concrete awareness because this, while promoting the idea of a theandric awareness that neither Hegel nor Baur appear to dislike, pictures God as an objective reality that is detached from the reality of humanity.[57] Following Hegel, Baur rejects this theory, because he is willing to accept the objectivity of God's being for only as long as this objectivity is connected with the objectivity of the human being.[58]

The theandric nature of religious awareness is very important though for Hegel's definition of God,[59] as Baur points out. It is in fact what, following Hegel, Baur calls "the self-awareness of God" which must be understood as a *successio* that develops by itself. In other words, it is a process that evolves through time and as time appears to be connected with creation, then the self-awareness of

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[54] An illuminating discussion about the relationship between finitude and the absolute spirit in Hegel, see F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 29–30.

[55] For details about Hegel's understanding of transcendence, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 46ff.

[56] See also David G. Leahy, *Faith and Philosophy. The Historical Impact* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 64.

[57] In Hegel, God and man are the one and same reality; this is why one can speak about the "ontological primacy" of the mind which is described by using terms such as "absolute reason" or "God". See, for details, John H. McClendon, III, *C.L.R. James's Notes on Dialectics. Left Hegelianism or Marxism-Leninism?* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 130.

[58] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 703–704.

[59] See also Allan Bloom (ed.), *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. Lectures on the* Phenomenology of the Spirit. *Alexandre Kojève* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 67.

God—which is, in the end, the human being's self-awareness[60]—should be seen from the perspective of what happens within the reality of the material world, as in Hegel, who offers in this context the definition of the perfect, or absolute, religion:[61]

> We have now reached the realized notion or conception of religion, the perfect religion, in which it is the notion itself that is its own object. We defined religion as being in the stricter sense the self-consciousness of God. Self-consciousness in its character as consciousness has an object, and it is conscious of itself in this object; this object is also consciousness, but it is consciousness as object, and is consequently finite consciousness, a consciousness which is distinct from God, from the absolute. The element of determinateness is present in this form of consciousness, and consequently finitude is present in it; God is self-consciousness, he knows himself in a consciousness which is distinct from him, which is potentially the consciousness of God, but is also this actually, since it knows the identity with God, an identity which is, however, mediated by the negation of finitude. It is this notion or conception which constitutes the content of religion.[62]

This explains why, in Hegel, God must not be seen as transcendent and supernatural, but as immanent and natural; God is a reality which resides in man's consciousness, the finite spirit of the human being:[63]

> Here is revealed what God is; he is no longer a being above and beyond this world, an unknown, for he has told men what he is, and this not merely is an outward way in history, but in consciousness. We have here, accordingly, the religion of the manifestation of God, since God knows himself in the finite spirit.[64]

Baur's Hegelian definition of God is not complete though if one accepts only the reality of self-awareness as constituent to God's being; there is another element which exists simultaneously within God's being and this is the externalization of God in nature[65]—which is a self-externalization of the God-man in Hegel[66]—and in the finite spirit through the cancellation of finitude in philosophy and religion.[67] It seems that God should be understood both as a subjective reality promoted through the idea of self-awareness and as an objective reality carried forward through the notion of externalization, when the reality of God seen as finite spirit which is able to absorb within itself the finitude of man's materiality.[68] The finitude of the spirit speaks of the superiority of the spirit over matter;[69] matter is not cancelled, but it is interpreted in a way which suppresses its finitude.[70] The spiritual meaning which can be attached to man's finite material life is more powerful than the finitude of matter itself.

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[60] Compare Philip Nel, "Redistribution *and* Recognition: What Emerging Regional Powers Want", 951–974, in *Review of International Studies* 36.4 (2010): 964.

[61] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 191.

[62] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 327.

[63] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 191–192.

[64] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 328.

There is, therefore, an intertwining between finitude and infinitude in God's being, where finitude is seen as some sort of negativity which must be overcome through the spirit that constantly turns to itself.[71] The self-awareness of the spirit is capable not only of nullifying the negativity of materiality but also of attaching itself to the infinite. The spirit is not infinite; he has the capacity though of connecting himself to the infinite through his self-awareness. The spirit's being-for-oneself is based on the necessity of its being-in-oneself, which seems to be an indication that the spirit's capacity to live for others, or his ethical awareness, is conditioned by his capacity to subsist in itself.[72] This shows that, on the one hand, the spirit can be traced back to the idea of God, especially since it subsists in itself and is able to live for others, and on the other hand, the spirit shows that God cannot exist without the world.[73] God comes from the world, as Baur shows; he is a being of the world, a "moment" or a manifestation of being, which—in Hegelian terms—cannot be detached from the material reality of the world despite its most fundamental spirituality.

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[65] Also check Adriaan T. Peperzak, *Modern Freedom. Hegel's Legal, Moral, and Political Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 79.

[66] Compare Murray N. Rothbard, "Karl Marx: Communist as Religious Eschatologist", 123–179, in Murray N. Rothbard and Walter Block (eds.), *The Review of Austrian Economics*, Volume 4 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 133, also published as Murray N. Rothbard, "Karl Marx: Communist as Religious Eschatologist", 221–294, in Yuri N. Maltsev, *Requiem for Marx* (Auburn, AL: Praxeology Press of the Ludwig von Mises Institute within Auburn University, 1993), 234.

[67] For a possible interpretation of the cancellation of finitude in Hegel through Martin Heidegger and Georg Lukács, see Daniel Price, *Without a Woman to Read. Toward the Daughter in Postmodernism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 102.

[68] Hegel's definition of God uses categories like self-awareness, externalization, and spirit which—when applied to something one cannot perceive by natural senses—appear to be subjective themselves. See also Charles Parsons, "Gödel and Philosophical Idealism", 166–192, in *Philosophia Matematica* (III) 18.2 (2010): 172.

[69] Compare James I. Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered", 1–24, in *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49.1 (2009): 19.

[70] See also Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambaridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 24.

[71] Robert G. McRae, *Philosophy and the Absolute. The Modes of Hegel's Speculation* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 29.

This is why Baur underlines that the most important feature of Hegel's philosophical system is the connection or the mutuality, the reciprocity between God and the world (human beings),[74] spirit and nature, infinity and finitude.[75] It is in fact what Baur understands to be the sheer dualism between spirit and matter. Baur concedes that one can start to think of God starting from the idea of the absolute spirit, but eventually what proves to be rationally acceptable is the fact that the spirit is fundamentally connected with nature and finitude; in other words, the spirit is natural, material, and finite, and it belongs to the necessity of the dialectical process of the idea which is self-mediating and self-conciliatory. God is identical with the spirit, with the finitude, naturalness, materiality, and finitude of the world, and it is in these terms that the spirit must be conceived according to Baur.[76]

The next step for him is to underline the identity between the capacity, as well as the quality, of God's being to reveal himself and the need for it to exist as spirit for the spirit, a notion which is not foreign to Hegel.[77] The idea of absolute spirit, which seems to be attached to the traditional theology that neither Hegel nor Baur are willing to endorse, must be defined in such a way that it is connected with the reality of the finite spirit, evidently of humanity.[78] The very nature of religious awareness presupposes the differentiation between finitude and infinitude, subject and object, being and knowing. For Baur, there is no awareness without such distinctions. When applied to God's awareness, one should realize that it is tied with the "concept" in the sense that when one considers God's awareness there are two possibilities: either there is no concept attached to God's awareness or, if there is one at all, then this concept must include the reality of finitude within it or, as Hegel puts it, the "finite spirit":[79]

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[72] Subsisting in oneself must be coupled with the capacity to think or reason for oneself, which in Hegel points to the rather restrictive theory of the rational essence of morality. See B. Andrew Lustig, "At the Roots of Christian Bioethics: Critical Essays on the Thought of H. Tristam Engelhardt, Jr.", 315–327, in *Christian Bioethics* 17.3 (2011): 318.

[73] See Raymond Plant, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 1999, first published 1997), 51.

[74] This is a mutuality among persons. See Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes, "*Diakonia*, the State, and Ecumenical Collaboration: Theological Pitfalls", 173–198, in *Christian Bioethics* 15.2 (2009): 179.

[75] This is why Hegel is convinced that God is not God without the world. See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 194.

[76] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 704–705.

[77] Hegel's notion of the "spirit for the spirit" was taken over by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in order to demonstrate that nothing in nature can be conceived without the spirit, which echoes again Hegel's belief in the unity between matter and spirit. See Roberto J. Walton, "Nature and the 'Primal Horizon' ", 97–114, in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *The Turning Points of the New Phenomenological Era. Husserl Research: Drawing upon the Full Extent of His Development*, Book 1: Phenomenology in the World Fifty Years after the Death of Edmund Husserl (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 105.

> It is the Christian religion which is the perfect religion, the religion which represents the being of spirit in a realized form, or for itself, the religion in which religion has itself become objective in relation to itself. In it the universal spirit and the particular spirit, the infinite spirit and the finite spirit, are inseparably connected; it is their absolute identity which constitutes this religion and is its substance or content.[80]

As far as Baur is concerned, the true notion of God's awareness, which is also religious awareness, must be defined by means of the concept of finitude as proof of the fundamental Hegelian connection between the absolute spirit and the finite spirit.[81] In other words, the very concept of God must be defined in close relationship with the reality of man's material finitude although, as Baur plainly admits, the traditional concept of God-in-himself, the God which exists independently from the human being, cannot be dismissed very easily. This is why Baur highlights that the idea of a God which is independent from the human being is widespread and it presupposes the notion of a personal and loving God which is different from the world, but which is able to love and to be loved. Such definition of God is based also on the conviction that God must be defined through the idea of personhood; a God like that has an eternal awareness which ontologically severs him from the world, seen as his creation.

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[78] See also Martin J. De Nys, "Speculation and Theonomy at the Close of Hegel's System", 201–225, in Peter G. Stillman (ed.), *Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), 207.

[79] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 540.

[80] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 330.

[81] See Reinhold Aschenberg, "On the Theoretical Form of Hegel's Aeshetics", 79–102, in Hugo Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., and Terry Pinkard (eds.), *Hegel Reconsidered. Beyond Metaphysics and the Authoritarian State* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 83.

Baur is convinced that such a definition of God is contrary to Christianity because it is built on "pathological and speculative interests", so one must differentiate between the popular and the scientific form of the presentation of the idea of God, the latter resembling Hegel's interest in scientific philosophy.[82]

In other words, one has to make up his or her mind about whether he or she accepts the popular idea of God, which sees God as ontologically dependent on the world and utterly infinite in his being, or the scientific perspective on God, which portrays God through the lens of a religious awareness that sees God based on the reality of the finite spirit.[83] Baur is critical of the idea of a personal God because, in his opinion, it blends far to easily what he calls "the interests of anthropopathy and anthropomorfism".[84] Traditional theology, as it were, pictures God in terms which resemble the human being and, in doing so, God is seen as a being which is independent of the human being, when what should be done instead, as advocated by Baur and Hegel, is to portray the human being as God, so that the human being bears divine attributes.[85] God cannot be conceived as spirit, Baur contends, if he is seen as personal. If God is understood as a personal God and independent of the human being, he must also be the absolute spirit and the absolute reason, the absolute love, the absolute wisdom, and the absolute good.[86] This is the common understanding of God in traditional theology but, according to Baur, such an interpretation of God is totally severed from the reality of the human spirit and, if we are to follow in Hegel's footsteps, a God that is not seen as reciprocity between and interpenetration of infinity and finitude cannot be a true God.[87] God cannot be conceived as spirit if he has no connection with the finite human spirit because the idea of an absolute spirit has no support in the objective reality of man's existence if investigated based on human reason and experience in the material world.[88]

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[82] Details about Hegel's view of scientific or systematic philosophy in Jeffrey Reid, "Hegel's Ontological Grasp of Judgement and the Original Dividing of Identity into Difference", 29–43, in *Dialogue* 45.1 (2006): 32.

[83] This reflects Hegel's conviction that philosophy should be grasped as a science or in a scientific way. See, for details, John H. Smith, *Dialogues between Faith and Reason. The Death and Return of God in Modern German Thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 115.

[84] For an interesting study which explains the idea of the spirit in relation with anthropopathy and anthropomorfism, see Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Iconoclastic Deity. Biblical Images of God* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1984), 109–112, 133, 141–147, 169.

[85] See Anthony Campolo, *We Have Met the Enemy and They are Partly Right* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1985), 38–39. Because of Hegel's efforts to portray God as an absolute spirit which manifests itself within the realm of material history, so that the image of God is made accessible only to those who are capable of a scientific view of religion, Campolo dubs Hegels "the pope of the middle class". Compare Maybee, *Picturing Hegel*, 9, which discusses Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel's view of God.

[86] In Hegel, the absolute good is predominantly an ethical construct, not an ontological being. See Robert B. Ware, *Hegel. The Logic of Self-Consciousness and the Legacy of Subjective Freedom* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 173–174.

For Baur, it is utterly important to understand God as spirit, but this has nothing to do with seeing God as a personal and objective being as in traditional theology. Consequently, the concept of God cannot be analyzed through the lens of the idea of absoluteness because should God be absolute, then he would also be characterized by personhood in order to include every reality in his being, which also points to the personhood of the human being. There must be a connection between God and humanity but not in the sense that God is seen as being personal and absolute. The image of the absolute God cannot be placed next to the reality of the God who revealed himself in the theandric or divine-human person of Christ. In Baur, and also in Hegel, God can only exist in Christ, God can only reveal himself in the material existence of the person of Christ, and especially in his death, as Hegel proves in the following paragraph:[89]

> (…) The death of Christ is truly understood by this spirit to mean that in Christ God is revealed together with the unity of the divine and human natures. Christ's death is accordingly the touchstone, so to speak, by means of which faith verifies its belief, since it is essentially here that its way of understanding the appearance of Christ makes itself manifest. Christ's death primarily means that Christ was the God-man, the God who had at the same time human nature, even unto death.[90]

In this sense, God can be conceived as personal while still being seen as spirit, but this does not mean that God's being has a personal existence beyond the objective reality of the material world, as in traditional theology. When God is seen as being revealed in the material existence of Christ,[91] God's awareness can be described as divine-human or theandric but only if seen as a succession which develops within history, because—as Hegel writes—"God appears as man, as God-man" and "it is here that this objectivity of God has its beginning.[92]

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[87] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 232.

[88] See Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 705–706.

[89] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 298.

[90] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 88–89.

[91] Compare Barry Cooper, "Modern Western Political Philosophy", 45–69, in Anthony J. Parel and Ronald C. Keith (eds.), *Comparative Political Philosophy. Studies under the Upas Tree* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1992), 54.

Thus, God's self-developing awareness must be confined to the realm of human history, which is evident in Hegel.[93] God cannot exist beyond human history; his existence and being must be conceived in terms which remain connected—on a constant and permanent basis—with the reality of the physical and material world of human history. There is no God without the world as there is no world without God; for Baur—and for Hegel for that matter—this means that God exists and stays within the world, not outside or beyond it.[94] This is why, for Baur but also for Hegel, it is impossible to have a classification of being in the sense that God is a superior being which is seen as an absolute, infinite spirit and then reveals itself in the inferior being of man's finite spirit. Baur points out that he accepts Hegel's often criticized stance that God exists for the spirit because he is a spirit and, in his capacity of being a spirit, God exists in all spirits and is the unity of all finite spirits. God is the self-aware reflex of man's finite spirit which reflects itself in and develops itself into God's being.

In this respect, Baur concludes, God is all in all, and this is the only way one can truly accept the true idea of God's immanence in the world, as in Hegel.[95] In other words, God seems to be constitutive of the world itself, this is why for Baur and Hegel the world cannot exist without God and God without the world. Baur then affirms Hegel's logical pantheism which seems to be a "satisfactory adjustment" of Christian religious interests.[96] This is to say, Baur is convinced that Hegel provided an adequate explanation of—which should be seen as an alternative to—traditional Christian theology.[97]

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[92] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 404.

[93] Compare Czeslaw Prokopczyk, *Truth and Reality in Marx and Hegel. A Reassessment* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 23.

[94] See Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th-Century Theology. God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 264.

[95] See also Allen W. Woods, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, reprinted 1995), 14.

[96] See also Klaus Penzel, "Philip Schaff: a Centennial Appraisal", 207–221, in *Church History* 59.2 (1990): 210.

[97] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 706.

Religion as Christianity, Paganism, and Judaism

Although Hegel's religious philosophy is primarily interested in Christianity and how it incorporates the idea of spirit,[98] he nevertheless discusses the problem of Paganism and Judaism, as well as their relationship with Christianity.[99] As Baur points out, in Hegel, there is a classification of religion in the sense that, while Paganism and Judaism are seen as subordinate or inferior religions, Christianity is singled out as the absolute religion.[100] Baur is also keen to settle the issue of how the "old Gnosis" perceived these three main religions, so he shows that the tendency of Gnosticism has always been to place Paganism and Judaism in some sort of negative relationship with Christianity. Baur also indicates that this rule, which sees some degree of opposition between Paganism and Judaism, on the one hand, and Christianity, on the other, is broken by the Gnosticism professed through the teachings of Valentinus and Clement of Alexandria.[101]

What is important to understand here is that, despite the prevalent bias of traditional Gnosticism to place Christianity in opposition to Paganism and Judaism, the modern philosophy of religion—and Baur mentions Schelling and Schleiermacher—continues the "minor" Gnostic tradition of Valentinus[102] and Clement of Alexandria[103] because it places Christianity in an equally positive relationship with Paganism and Judaism. To be sure, in the modern philosophy of religion of Schelling[104] and Schleiermacher,[105] both Paganism and Judaism are seen as religious systems or developments which preceded Christianity.[106] In other words, religion has followed a certain type of development in the world, which starts with Paganism, continues with Judaism, and then is completed by Christianity. Baur deplores the fact that neither Schelling, nor Schleiermacher performed a deeper research about the relationship between Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, but then he focuses on Hegel, who is said to have approached the relationship between the three main religions in a wider, more inclusive way.[107] For Hegel, Baur explains, each type of religion—whether one speaks of Paganism, Judaism, or Christianity—is approached from the standpoint of its own development, character, and particular situation within the framework of general history, as indicated by Hegel:[108]

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[98] Richard Reitan, "*Völkerpsychologie* and the Appropriation of 'Spirit' in Meiji Japan", 495–522, in *Modern Intellectual History* 7.3 (2010): 515.

[99] One of Hegel's interests was the political aspects of Christianity, Paganism, and Judaism. See Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, reprinted 1994), 29.

[100] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 83.

[101] For details about the relationship between Valentinus and Clement of Alexandria, see Peter Lampe, *Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries. From Paul to Valentinus* (London: Continuum, 2003), 295.

[102] Whether Valentinus was a Gnostic or not, one has to decide for oneself. See Philip L. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse. Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 9ff, and Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism. Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 17.

[103] An excellent study of Clement of Alexandria, which explains the historical context of Clement's Alexandria as well as his relationship with Gnosticism is Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 84ff.

> The different forms or specific kinds of religion are, in one aspect, moments of religion in general, or of perfected religion. They have, however, an independent aspect too, for in them religion has developed itself in time, and historically. Religion, in so far as it is definite, and has not as yet completed the circle of its determinateness—so far that is as it is finite religion, and exists as finite—is historical religion, or a particular form of religion. Its principal moments, and also the manner in which they exist historically, being exhibited in the progress of religion from stage to stage, and in its development, there thus arises a series of forms of religion, or a history of religion.[109]

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[104] Further information about how Schelling saw Christianity, Judaism, and Paganism can be found in George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany. Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 70–71.

[105] The relationship between Christianity and Judaism, as well as that between Christianity and Paganism is discussed in Bruce D. Marshall, "Christ and Cultures: The Jewish People and Christian Theology", 81–100, in Colin E. Gunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, reprinted 2001), 87.

[106] For details about how Baur understood Schelling and Schleiermacher, see Thomas H. Curran, *Doctrine and Speculation in Schleiermacher*'s Glaubenslehre (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 108–109.

[107] See also Jay M. Harris, *Nachman Krochmal. Guiding the Perplexed of the Modern Age* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1991), 57–58.

[108] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 76.

[109] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 76.

Thus, in approaching Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, Hegel is interested in seeing the general picture, the way each religion followed its own course through history and also the role each played in the general context of history. It is crucial to see here that, for Hegel, Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity are all main forms of religion, so the idea and reality of religion *per se* are revealed through the study of each religious manifestation in its historical context.[110] Whether or not Paganism and Judaism find themselves in some opposition with Christianity may be an issue of importance for Hegel at some point, but—as Baur shows—what comes first is a serious analysis of each religion in particular before any conclusions about the relationships amongst them are eventually drawn.[111] This is why, according to Baur, Hegel spent much time dealing with Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity as individual, particular religious manifestations which exemplify the development of the concept of religion through the general history of humanity.[112]

If the relationship between Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity is to be properly understood in order to explain what Hegel means by religion, then each main religion must be presented in detail. This is why Baur makes sure that Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity are depicted separately regarding the fundamental aspects of their religious content. The first to be described is Paganism, which for Hegel is thoroughly connected with the concept of natural religion.[113] The consistency of natural religion is given by the unity between nature and spirit.[114]

It is important to notice here that, according to Hegel, the idea of nature in Paganism refers to the reality of individual existence, not to nature. For instance, the individual reality of the elements which make up the totality of nature like the sun or heaven is considered to be God. Nevertheless, what is applicable to individual realities in nature can also be applicable to the whole reality of nature, so the concept of natural religion is essentially pantheistic.[115]

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[110] Christianity can be seen as a superior form of religion which unites Paganism and Judaism. See also Dieter Ising, *Johan Christoph Bumhardt. Leben und Werk* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002), 50.

[111] See also Johan H.J. van der Pot, *Sinndeutung und Periodisierung der Geschichte. Eine systematische Übersicht der Theorien und Auffassungen* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 294.

[112] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 721–722.

[113] For details about natural religion in Hegel, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 280.

[114] See Steven B. Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism. Rights in Context* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 44.

[115] Especially concerning the Indian religion, namely Hinduism. See Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, and London: C. Hurst & Co., 2000), 94.

Baur notices that, in Hegel, the Indian religion is an example of such pantheistic perspective on nature,[116] where the idea of God is to be sought in the material realities of nature.[117]

Another example of Paganism, as Baur shows following on Hegel's footsteps, is the Greek religion which, unlike the Indian religion, does not look for God in the realities of nature.[118] For the Greeks, God is to be sought in a totally different sphere, namely in the reality of spiritual individuality. The spirit does manifest itself through nature, because the very essence of natural religion is the connection between the spirit and nature itself.[119] What is important to realize at this point is that the way the spirit manifests itself though nature can take different shapes but the main idea is that religious awareness is always linked with nature. For the spirit, the connection with nature is essential, so in natural religion the spirit is not only inclined to manifest itself through nature; it is inextricably connected with nature. In Hegel, the connection between the spirit and nature presupposes the fact that natural realities—as they exist in history—can be seen in a figurative way.[120] In other words, there must be a relationship between the image and the idea, between what man perceives as an image of nature and the spiritual meaning thereof. In other words, the image has a spiritual content which reflects itself in that image; in religious terms, the concept of God must be seen in the material manifestations of nature. To be sure, as Hegel writes, the image of nature can be understood spiritually in a whole variety of ways through its main forms: symbol and myth, where the former is a conceptual device that bears the meaning of the latter concerning the capacity of the spirit to come back to life from death:[121]

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[116] According to Hegel, Indian pantheism deprives the individual of its "value in itself". See Ankur Barua, "The Solidarities of Caste: The Metaphysical Basis of the 'Organic' Community", 98–122, in *The Journal of Hindu Studies* 2.1 (2009): 119, n. 6.

[117] For details about Hegel's understanding of Hinduism, compare Dorothy M. Figueira, *The Exotic. A Decadent Quest* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 75.

[118] More information about Hegel's view of the Greek religion, in Shawn Kelley, *Racializing Jesus. Race, Ideology, and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship* (London: Routledge, 2002), 60.

[119] See also Andrew Fiala, "The Dawning of Desire: Hegel's Logical History of Philosophy and Politics", 51–64, in David A. Duquette (ed.), *Hegel's History of Philosophy. New Interpretation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 61–62.

[120] See Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2000, reprinted 2006), 129.

[121] How symbol and myth work in Hegel, see for instance, Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 419–420.

> The phoenix is a well-known symbol of [the eternal nature of the spirit (which is said that it is able to) die to self, to render itself finite in nature, and yet it is by the annulling of its natural existence that it comes to itself]. What we have here is not the warfare of good with evil, but a divine process which pertains to the nature of God himself, and is the process in one individual. The more precise form in which this progressive process definitely appears is represented by [the myth of] Adonis (…) [which] has reference to the seed lying under the ground, and then springing up out of it. (…) Its true meaning, however, is (…) the transition generally from life, from affirmative being, to death, to negation, and then again the rising up out of this negation—the absolute mediation which essentially belongs to the notion or conception of the spirit.[122]

When nature is explained symbolically and mythologically, natural religion goes through a process of deification.[123] In other words, nature is spiritually deified through symbol and myth,[124] which means that nature is part of the "process of the spirit".[125] In the Greek religion, the spirit must be seen through nature and the process which allows the spirit to be perceived through nature transfigures nature itself. Thus, nature turns into an image of the divine spirit, which is the very truth of nature.[126]

At this point, however, Baur underlines the fact that Hegel's idea of natural religion as applied to the Greek religion has a certain peculiarity, in the sense that the figurative or the symbolic-mythical character of natural religion is not contemplated at all.[127] This means, at least for Baur, that the Greek religion is disconnected from the concept of natural religion as reflected in the Indian religion.[128] Thus, while for the Indian religion the idea of God is searched for and eventually seen in the reality of nature, for the Greek religion the reality of nature points to the idea of God. In other words, as Baur notices in Hegel, while for the Greek religion nature is part of the process of the spirit, for the Indian religion the spirit is part of the process of nature.[129]

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[122] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 84–85.

[123] Compare Frederick Copleston, *History of Philosophy. Fichte to Nietzsche* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1963, and Wellwood: Search Press, 1963), 295.

[124] An informative analysis of myth and symbols in Hegel can be found in Marcella Tarozzi Goldsmith, *The Future of Art. An Aesthetics of the New and the Sublime* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 59–61.

[125] For more information about Hegel's notion of the "process of the spirit", see Montserrat Herrero, "The Right of Freedom regarding Nature in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*", 141–160, in Ana Marta González (ed.), *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law. Natural Law as a Limiting Concept* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 147, and Edmundo Balsemão Pires, "Phenomenology as the Justification for the Self-Reference of the Absolute", 87–108, in Edmundo Balsemão Pires (ed.), *Still Reading Hegel. 200 Years after the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra/Coimbra University Press, 2009), 97.

[126] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 722–724.

[127] Hegel seems to be more concerned with the clarity of the Spirit, which can be identified with the notion of God. See Simon D. Podmore, *Kierkegaard and the Self before God. Anatomy of the Abyss* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 20.

This is most likely why Baur is convinced that, as far as the Greek religion is concerned, symbol and myth are not used to explain nature itself, but rather to provide information about spiritual individuality. To be sure, spiritual individuality is part of nature, but it must not be overlapped with nature in general. For Hegel, Baur contends, spiritual individuality is explained only in mythical terms. Consequently, in the Greek religion, gods are spiritual individualities or personal beings with a concrete character, so they very much resemble the reality of the human being.[130] The very root of the being of gods is connected with natural life, so the reality of the natural life reflects itself on the spiritual image of the gods.[131] It is not natural life in general, but the individual character of natural life as present in each human being; this is what for the Greeks constitutes the natural individuality which is eventually perceived as spiritual individuality.

Thus, while in the Indian religion, symbols and myths are used to see the whole of nature in a spiritual way, so gods are to be looked for in all animate and inanimate material elements of the world,[132] in the Greek religion, symbols and myths are used to see the individuality of human beings in a spiritual way so gods are also to be sought in the animate reality of the human being, because the root of their being is connected with man's existence in the world.[133] A Greek God is the result of the symbolical understanding of the human being which is then mythically personified into a being which transcends the individuality of the human being in the world in order to exist as a spiritual individuality in the world. Baur correctly notices that, in Hegel, the spiritual individualities of the Greek gods are personifications, as well as artistic representations or figurative-ideal images of actual, human individualities:[134]

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[128] For details about the relationship between the Greek and Indian Religions in Hegel and how they were classified by Hegel, see Michael H. Hoffheimer, "Race and Law in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion", 194–216, in Andrew Valls (ed.), *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 203–205.

[129] Details about Indian and Greek religions can be found in Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 45–46.

[130] Compare Francesca Aran Murphy, *The Comedy of Revelation. Paradise Lost and Regained in Biblical Narrative* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 297.

[131] For more details about the Greek religion in Hegel, check also Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 201–202.

[132] For a useful discussion about Hegel's perspective on Indian religions, see Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, "What if *Religio* Remained Untranslatable?", 87–100, in Philip Goodchild (ed.), *Difference in Philosophy of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 94–95.

> The Greek gods themselves are not symbolical; they are what they represent, just as the conception of a work of art means the giving expression to what is meant, and does not mean that what is inward is something different from what is outwardly seen. Even if the beginnings of the Greek god are to be traced back to some such ancient symbolic representation, still what this is actually made into has become the work of art which perfectly expresses what it is intended to be.[135]

Baur makes it clear that although the differences between the Greek religion, which emphasizes spiritual individualities based on the natural individuality of the human being, and Indian religions, which work with the idea of God as sought in the whole reality of nature, are evident, they both pertain to the wider domain of natural religion within the lines of Hegel's thought.[136] This conclusion is the result of Baur's conviction that the new philosophy of religion, Hegel included, tackles Paganism—which evidently includes Indian/Oriental religions and the Greek religion—as an important moment that belongs to the development of religion. From this perspective, Paganism uses nature as the vehicle which mediates the connection with the spirit in order to provide humanity with various images of gods; these divine images, however, which Paganism offers in such diverse ways are "wrapped in a veil", so according to Baur they do not seem to be the purest products of what religion has to offer.[137]

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[133] Hegel's idea of gods in the Greek religion is competently discussed in Jack Kaminsky, *Hegel on Art. An Interpretation of Hegel's Aesthetics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1962), 81–82.

[134] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 153.

[135] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 285.

[136] For further information about Hegel's notion of natural religion, see Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, "An Investigation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*", 351–374, in Jon Stewart (ed.), *The* Phenomenology of Spirit *Reader. Critical and Interpretative Essays* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 355ff.

[137] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 724–725.

The idea of Paganism is important for Hegel in as much as it helps him draft the contours of what he means by natural religion; when it comes to natural religion though the concept itself proves to be significant because it offers Hegel the chance to sketch his understanding of religion in general. In other words, it seems that Baur's interest in Hegel's ideas of Paganism, natural religion, and religion is justified by his way of reading Christianity in a modern key. This means that, as far as Baur is concerned, and based on Hegel's understanding of religion, Christianity is just another world religion which is connected with other religions through the reality of their common antiquity.[138] To establish this hypothesis, however, Baur needs Hegel's perspective on religion, which derives from his concept of natural religion as predominantly exposed in his description of Paganism. Baur himself admits that Paganism should be studied in the context of the modern conviction that religion is, to a certain extent, philosophy.

This is why he points out that the idea of Paganism as the religion which turns nature into the reality which mediates the connection with the spirit in order to provide man with images of divinity or gods is the result of the new philosophy of religion. This new religious philosophy though is so concerned with the study of Paganism in this particular way that it can also be seen as the new science of antiquity.[139] Baur appears to be very fond of the new religious philosophy seen as the new science of antiquity because it approaches Paganism from an angle which is anything but narrow. Considering the new religious philosophy and its development as a science of antiquity, Paganism appears as a concept with a rather wide inclusive capacity,[140] in the sense that it is not restricted to Indian/Oriental religions; indeed it opens up to Greek religion.

Baur seems to be able to recognize this approach in Hegel although he confesses his inability to say where exactly his understanding of Paganism fits into Hegel's philosophy of religion. It seems that Hegel's main preoccupation with Paganism lies in his interest in history; Paganism presents a huge importance for Hegel only in so far as it shows how religion developed throughout history because this is how he can later explain the development of religion from Paganism to Judaism and Christianity.[141] In Hegel, Paganism cannot be detached from the concept of natural religion, and Baur is fully aware of this, so Paganism seems to be the first step in the development of religion throughout history in a form which can be described as pertaining to the field of natural religion. At this point though, Baur notices that, in Hegel, the idea of matter is crucial, because—as Hegel writes—it introduces the notion of evil as part of the world, so religion needs not only to explain it, but also to reconcile it with the reality of the world as well as the counter-notions of absolute and finite spirit, namely God and man:[142]

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[138] See Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 37–38.

[139] The idea of a "new science of antiquity", so useful to Baur, is also present in Wilhelm von Humboldt, the brother of the equally famous Alexander von Humboldt. See Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit. Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 277.

[140] For details about the inclusive character of Paganism, see Graham Harvey, "Animist Paganism", 393–412, in James R. Lewis and Murphy Pizza (eds.), *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 409.

> The first moment on this side of differentiation is that of potentiality, the moment of being which is in identity with itself, of formlessness, of objectivity, in fact. This is matter as representing which is indifferent or undifferentiated, as existence of which all parts are of equal value. (…) Over against this moment of undifferentiated potential being there now stands being-for-self, the negative in general, form. This negative now appears, in its at first indeterminate form, as the negative element in the world, while the latter is the positive element, what subsists. The negativity which is opposed to this subsisting element, to this feeling of self, to this definite being, to this established existence, is evil. In contrast to God, to this reconciled unity of being-in-itself and being-for-itself, appears the element of distinction or difference. We have on the one hand the world as positively and independently existing, and on the other destruction and contradiction in the worlds̜ and here the questions suggest themselves, which pertain to all religions based on a more or less developed consciousness, as to how evil is to be reconciled with the absolute unity of God, and wherein lies the origin of evil. This negative, in the first place, appears as the evil in the world, but it recalls itself into identity with itself, in which it is the being-for-self of self-consciousness—finite spirit.[143]

Paganism may be a cluster of religions which should be presented as part of the concept of natural religion, but it cannot be properly understood unless explained as reality, the reality of matter. In Hegel, as Baur points out, matter should be considered the necessary mediator between the factuality of history and the spirit; the connection between humanity and divinity—if one stays within the sphere of religious terminology—is possibly only through the mediation of matter.[144] In this respect, Baur is convinced that, in Hegel, matter is nothing but nature as understood in an abstract way.[145] In other words, nature is abstract nature for Hegel, so Paganism is not only a natural religion, but also a religion which appeals to nature in order to develop its images of divinity.[146]

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[141] Stephen Backhouse, *Kierkegaard's Critique of Christian Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 52.

[142] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 71–72.

[143] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 1, 71–72.

In an attempt to explain Hegel's religious philosophy in a better way, Baur makes reference to how Karl Rosenkranz[147]—one of Hegel's students, whose career contributed to the development of Hegelianism through the nineteenth century—sees the idea of religion and especially natural religion.[148] For starters, Baur underlines that Rosenkranz and Hegel have a very strict understanding of natural religion. For Rosenkranz, and also for Hegel, natural religion is only the religion of the people, Baur contends, so the whole concept of natural religion has to be understood in popular terms. For instance, religious images are seen by Rosenkranz as the very elements which shape religion itself in a way which keeps the spirit at a certain distance. Thus, religious images should be understood based on man's natural awareness, so references to divinity should not be seen through the lens of the spirit but rather through the mediacy of nature. The idea of divinity, therefore, cannot be embraced spiritually but rather symbolically.[149]

According to Rosenkranz, Baur notices, the idea of natural religion finds its expression in what he calls "symbolical or graphical religions", which lack the certainty of rationality. The religion of Black people in Africa or that of native Americans are examples of such natural approaches to religion which are devoid of a certain rational perception. In such religions, the idea of divinity appears somewhat randomly and then dissolves into the things of nature. Other natural religions attempt to rid themselves of this uncertainty which does not allow them to picture divinity in a clear way, so the Chinese,[150] Tibetans, Indians, Persians, and Egyptians promoted religions which tried to understand the idea of divinity as a copy of man's being.[151] This means that man's rationality was taken into account for the drafting of the image of divinity and, although divine and natural elements were still intermingled, the reality of the "self-aware spirit", which is man's spirit, was already present in shaping the idea of God.

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[144] More details about Hegel's view of matter and also for its importance for the mediation between history and the spirit, see Frederick L. Aldama, *Why the Humanities Matter. A Commonsense Approach* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008), 56ff.

[145] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 528.

[146] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 725.

[147] For details about Rosenkranz's Hegelianism, see Rudolf Steiner, *Earthly Knowledge and Heavenly Wisdom* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1991), 16–18.

[148] For the purposes of his analysis of Rosenkranz, Baur used Rosenkranz's *Die Naturreligion. Ein philosophisch-historischer Versuch* (Iserlohn: Langewische, 1831).

[149] More details regarding Rosenkranz's idea of God and its symbolic interpretation, in Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel and the Freedom of Moderns* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 9–10.

For Rosenkranz, these are symbolical religions, namely those which see God through the elements of nature. Regardless of whether the idea of God is construed based on man's rationality or not, the reality of nature is paramount for the shaping of the image of divinity in these natural religions. The idea of the spirit may or may not interfere in setting up a certain perspective on divinity, but this cannot be achieved without the necessary reference to natural elements.[152] In other words, divinity is sought in the reality of nature; divinity is something which cannot be detached from nature because the notion of God itself is to be found in the materiality of nature. The fact that the image of God is animated or not has little importance. Likewise, whether or not the self-aware spirit of man is used to reflect the image of divinity is again not important. What is important has to do with the fact that God is part of nature in all these religions; God is perceived as something which not only pertains to the elements of nature but, at the same time, has nothing to do with the actual person of the human being. Thus, in these natural religions which Rosenkranz resents,[153] man is able to think of God while he himself is not God. In other words, God is not conceived in human terms, but only in a non-human, exclusively natural way.[154]

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[150] Baur makes a mistake here when quoting Rosenkranz, because while Rosenkranz clearly meant "the Chinese" (*Chinesen*), Baur inadvertently wrote "the Greeks" (*Griechen*). See Rosenkranz, *Die Naturreligion*, 247, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 726.

[151] God is not only a copy of man's being but the identical copy of man's being. Thus, there is a perfect coincidence between humanity and divinity in Rosenkranz. See Jakob Peter Mynster, "Rationalism, Supernaturalism", 93–110, in *Mynster's "Rationalism, Supernaturalism" and the Debate about Mediation*, ed. and trans. Jon Stewart (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2009), 99–100.

[152] Rosenkranz insists on nature to the point that his discourse becomes naturalistic. See, for instance, Winfried Menninghaus, *Disgust. The Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*, trans. Howard Eiland and Joel Golb (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 139–146.

[153] Compare H.S. Harris, "Hegel's System of Ethical Life. An Interpretation", 3–96, in G.W.F. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1979), 85.

As Rosenkranz explains Hegel, especially about the latter's understanding of natural religion, Baur continues to offer details about his perspective on the role of nature in the making up of religion. Having explained how Oriental religions work with nature in their attempt to find God in the realities of nature but without reference to the human being itself, Rosenkranz moves closer to Western religions as promoted by the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans. While noticing that nature was compelling for Oriental religions in the sense that God could not be conceived outside the materiality of natural elements, Western religions seem to breach what Rosenkranz calls "the circle of nature".[155] This means that they are capable of providing an image of divinity which is based on the human being itself; in other words, in Western religions, gods look like people. In all pre-Christian religions, with the notorious exception of Judaism, nature seems to have been the key element in the presentation of divinity. It is crucial to understand that there are at least three ways in which nature can represent divinity: first, when nature contains the idea of the spirit in itself so God is said to live in the elements of nature;[156] second, when the spirit is ambiguously present in nature so that it attempts to reflect itself in nature;[157] and third, when divinity is expressed through the natural character of the human being, so gods are self-aware copies of man.[158]

Clearly in all these cases nature plays the very important role of having religion figuratively sensualized. As fundamental elements of religion, Gods are represented in a natural way, so they are endowed with senses according to the pattern provided by the human being itself. In Rosenkranz though it is not only religion in general which benefits from being endowed with the reality of senses; religious ideas receive the same treatment, so everything pertaining to religion—either the images of God or Gods and the actual tenets which are more or less associated with these Gods—is soaked in the natural senses despite the fact that it can be read in a figurative way. Rosenkranz's preoccupation is to see how nature is able figuratively to sensualize religious ideas; in other words how images and ideas can stay together within the same concept of religion.[159] What is crucial not to overlook at this point is Rosenkranz's conviction that the spirit and nature find themselves in a close relationship regardless of whether the spirit is aware of nature or not. Since images and ideas can be placed within the same idea of religion,[160] it means that nature and the spirit coexist within the same reality; this is why the nature of their interpenetration is an issue of interest for Rosenkranz. The most evident manifestation of natural religion is when nature has only a figurative meaning for the spirit despite the fact that the spirit itself lives in nature. While some religions understand nature more based on senses, so nature is sensualized in such religious understandings, the reality of senses cannot be said to have been the only aspect which prevailed in natural religions. Rosenkranz seems convinced that, beside the senses which provide religion with figurative images (especially of gods or God-like elements), there is also another aspect which must taken into account, namely man's intuition or perception which can open religion to the reality of ideas (more or less associated with the figurative images of Gods).[161]

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[154] See Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 725–726.

[155] The phrase "circle of nature" can also be found in Hegel. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, herausgegeben Eduard Gans, zweite Auflage (Berlin: Verlag von Dunker und Humblot, 1840), 253.

[156] Rosenkranz obviously gets the idea of the spirit in nature from Hegel. See John Dewey, *Early Essays and* Leibnitz's New Essays. *The Early Works, 1882–1898* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 165.

[157] The idea of the spirit's reflection in nature is present in Hegel. In this case, the spirit should be understood as reason. See Howard P. Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System. A Contemporary Reconstruction of the Hegelian Problematic* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 87.

[158] The notion of divine self-awareness which manifests itself in the human being is also present in Hegel. See John E. Noyes, "Christianity and Theories of International Law in Nineteenth-Century Britain", 235–258, in Mark W. Janis and Carolyn Evans (eds.), *Religion and International Law* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff/Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 246.

Baur seems very interested in Rosenkranz since he quotes him at length. At a certain point, Baur also quotes Rosenkranz as the latter makes reference to one of the most important books published by Isaak Rust.[162] It seems that Baur is interested in Rosenkranz's view about Rust because Rosenkranz comes up with a criticism of Rust's perspective on the characteristics of Paganism.

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[159] Hegel also discusses the relationship between ideas and images as components of religion. See Garrett Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination. The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 92–93.

[160] See also Garrett Green, "Who's Afraid of Ludwig Feuerbach: Suspicion and the Religious Imagination", 45–65, in James O. Duke and Anthony L. Dunnavant (eds.), *Christian Faith Seeking Historical Understanding. Essays in Honor of H. Jack Forstman* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 53.

[161] Rosenkranz, *Die Naturreligion*, vii, and Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 727.

[162] Noted philosopher and theologian, Isaak Rust (1796–1862), was professor of "speculative theology" at the University of Erlangen. Baur quotes Rosenkranz as making reference to Rust's *Philosophie des Christentums*, but the exact title is *Philosophie und Christenthum oder Wissen und Glauben*, zweite verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage (Mannheim: Schwan und Gößischen, 1833).

According to Rosenkranz, Rust's understanding of Paganism is flawed, so he confesses that he finds it insufficient.[163] Rust differentiates between three stages of the development of the spirit: first, there is the phase of the feeling (*Gefühl*) or unmediated knowledge (*Erkenntnis*); second, the phase of understanding (*Verstand*) or opinion (*Meinung*), and third, the phase of reason (*Vernunft*), philosophy (*Philosophie*) or science (*Wissen*).[164]

Rosenkranz continues his analysis of Rust by explaining that these three stages of the development of the spirit correspond with the three periods of the development of religion: Paganism or unmediated morality, Judaism or the law, and Christianity or faith. Rosenkranz is critical of Rust's understanding of Paganism, because Rust does not seem ready to approach Paganism in all its complexity, mainly because of his rejection of Hegel's approach.[165] What Rust does, according to Rosenkranz, is to underline only the flaws of Paganism.[166] For Rosenkranz, this means that Rust sees Paganism as the principle of natural religion which is anchored in human feeling, and not in human intuition. If Paganism is a manifestation of natural religion as anchored in feeling, which is Rust's perspective, it means that Paganism is seen only in moral-ethical terms as the embodiment of the "practical spirit". Rosenkranz clearly disagrees with Rust, because in his view, Paganism is not only about a certain practical morality; on the contrary, Paganism includes a wide variety of intuitive insights, so the aspect of the mind is also to be taken into account.

Baur seems to agree with Rosenkranz—although tacitly—because he continues to quote Rosenkranz as saying that viewing Paganism only in terms of morality is certainly not enough. According to Rosenkranz—but also to Baur—Paganism is much more than mere morality as a manifestation of the practical spirit. The spirit of Paganism was able to express the absoluteness of the idea of God through a complex polytheistic religious system;[167] this is why Pagan gods are conceived as earthly, temporal, and local entities. Rosenkranz also underlines that Paganism managed to subdue the eternal power of nature by conceptualizing it as fate, so it is utterly wrong to describe Paganism as devoid of a symbolical-mystical character. Rosenkranz's critique of Rust's idea of Paganism is crucial for Baur, because it reveals Baur's willingness to see Paganism not only as a mere manifestation of practical morality, but also as an attempt to conceptualize the variegated manifestations of nature. Paganism thus is not only a natural religion which anchors its manifestation in human feeling; on the contrary, it comes up with concepts which reflect man's capacity to understand natural reality in symbolical and mythical terms.[168]

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[163] Rosenkranz dismissed Rust's understanding of Paganism most likely because the latter went through a conversion having read the works of Martin Luther. The immediate result of Rust's conversion was that he gave up Hegelianism. See, for details, Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals. The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848–1849* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 83.

[164] The table of contents of Rust's *Philosophie und Christentum* reflects this approach. See Rust, *Philosophie und Christentum*, xvii.

[165] For a critical view of Rust's rejection of Hegelianism, see Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41.

[166] Rust's main criticism of Paganism is its limited interest in the natural reality. In other words, what Rosenkranz seems to have disliked about Rust's idea of Paganism was the fact that Rust did not include the spirit in his assessment thereof. See Rust, *Philosophie und Christentum*, 90.

Having discussed the definition of Paganism, Baur moves on to an investigation of Judaism in Hegel, for whom Judaism is the religion of transcendence.[169] Such a definition does not completely satisfy Baur who believes that once Judaism is seen only as the religion of transcendence,[170] the result is a unilateral presentation thereof. Baur is aware that, in Hegel, transcendence refers to God's relationship with the world, often times translated in apocalyptic language,[171] so the very essence of Judaism as religion is captured only partially if transcendence is its sole main characteristic. According to Baur, if Hegel is right in saying that transcendence is the foundation of Judaism, then the moral purpose of God's wisdom is dangerously limited, moral obedience cannot be conceived in spiritual terms, and punishment can be considered only in external terms.[172] This is why, despite his general approval of Hegel's approach, Baur expresses his concern about Hegel's definition of Judaism as the religion of transcendence, which seems to be quite restrictive. Baur also dismisses Hegel's conviction that Judaism appeared before the Greek religion,[173] so Baur has serious doubts concerning whether Judaism, the religion of transcendence, should be considered the precursor of the Greek religion, whose focus is beauty. As far as Baur's doubts are concerned, they may have been caused by Hegel's conviction—apparently too limited for Baur—that Judaism as religion of transcendence focuses on notions like family, the nation, and service to God, all stemming from the reality of subjectivity, so characteristic to Judaism in Hegel:[174]

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[167] Seeing the absolute character of divinity in Paganism is a distinctive mark of Hegelianism, which Rust dismisses as false and unilateral subjectivity of feeling and reason. See also Friedmann Voigt, *Vermittlung im Streit. Das Konzept theologischer Vermittlung in den Zeitschriften der Schulen Schleiermachers und Hegels* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006), 135.

[168] See Rust, *Philosophie und Christentum*, 53; Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 727.

[169] For details about how Hegel understands transcendence, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 46.

[170] Baur's idea of transcendence resembles Hegels; see Michael A. Meyer, "Judentum und Christentum", 177–207, in Michael Brenner, Stefi Jersch-Wenyel, und Michael A. Meyer, *Deutch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, zweiter Band: Emanzipation und Akkulturation, 1780–1871 (München: C.H. Beck, 1996), 181.

[171] See also Christoph Schulte, "Paulus", 93–104, in Richard Faber, Eveline Goodman-Thau, Thomas Macho (Hrsg.), *Abendländische Eschatologie. Ad Jacob Taubes* (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen und Neumann, 2001), 98.

[172] More about how Hegel sees punishment in society, in Thom Brooks, "Corlett on Kant, Hegel, and Retribution", 561–580, in *Philosophy* 76.4 (2001): 577.

> Subjectivity, as end, is self-determination, and hence it has particularization in it—particularization, in fact, as such, in the form of a world of concretely existing differences which exist as so many divine forms. Subjectivity in the religion of sublimity [Judaism] has already a definite end, namely, the family, the nation. But this end is only realized in so far as the service of the Lord is not neglected.[175]

Unlike Baur, Hegel seems to be convinced that both Judaism and the Greek religion share a common characteristic in the sense that, concerning both, God entered free subjectivity, which means that the idea of sovereignty is more important than the reality of finitude.[176] Consequently, the subject, which is the spirit, should be conceived as the spiritual subject in a close relationship with naturalness and finitude. In other words, Hegel believes in the ideality of naturalness, which means that nature is made subject to the spirit, so the spirit is superior to nature.[177] Thus, God should be conceived as the spirit in itself, as the spirit itself, so his characteristics can be rationally conceived as moral.[178] Although, according to Hegel, these features were supposed to be valid for both Judaism and the Greek religion, it is quite clear that Baur is willing to ascribe them to Judaism only. This is why, unlike Hegel, he is totally unable to see any connection between Judaism and the Greek religion, in which gods are merely tokens of their origination in nature and their existence proves their absolute dependence on the power of nature.[179]

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[173] Compare Louis Dupré, "Transitions and Tensions in Hegel's Treatment of Determinate Religion", in Kolb (ed.), *New Perspectives in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, 91.

[174] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 96.

[175] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 225–226.

[176] For other details about the notion of sovereignty in Hegel's perspective on Judaism, see Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 140.

[177] See Yirmiyahu Yovel, "Nietzsche and the Jews. The Structure of Ambivalence", 277–290, in Christa Davis Acampora (ed.), *Nietzsche*'s On The Genealogy of Morals. *Critical Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 277–278.

[178] This resulted in an "imageless God" and a religion which did not manage to provide a visual representation of God. See also Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew. Medieval and*

In other words, in the Greek religion, gods are images of humanity, and if morality is seen as constitutive to being, it means that one can only speak of the morality of the human being (since gods only reflect the morality and the existence of the human being).[180] Thus, as Baur notices, there is no subjectivity of the Greek gods based exclusively on moral grounds because the morality of the Greek gods is totally dependent on man's natural existence. This is why Baur underlines the fact that he does not see any merit in the Greek religion being placed next to Judaism, because while in the Greek religion morality is grounded on man's natural existence, in Judaism things are fundamentally different. Thus, Judaism distinguishes itself from the Greek religion through the fact that moral actions are connected with the awareness of a moral purpose, which is united with God's will; in Judaism though, unlike in the Greek religion, the image of God is transcendent, not dependent on the natural character of humanity.[181]

Baur goes on to ascertain the fundamental difference between Judaism and Paganism by saying that even if morality were excluded from the whole discussion, the progress from polytheism to monotheism would be enough to place Judaism above the sphere of Paganism, so Judaism distinguishes itself from Paganism—if not on moral grounds—based on its idea of God. At the same time, Baur admits that Hegel did not miss the significance of monotheism for the Jewish religion, because he sees the necessity to elevate it to the status of

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Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 15.

[179] For an acid criticism of Hegel's view of Judaism which does partial justice to Baur's critical stanzas, see Steven Bayme, *Understanding Jewish History. Texts and Commentaries* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing, 1997), 280.

[180] Details about Hegel's view of morality, as well as the distinction he makes between *Sittlichkeit* (morality as custom or ethical life) and *Moralität* (morality as "universalization of intention and will"), in H. Tristam Engelhardt, Jr., "Moral Obligation after the Death of God: Critical Reflections on Concerns from Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, and Elizabeth Anscombe", 317–340, in *Social Philosophy and Policy* 27.2 (2010): 332. See also Myriam Bienenstock, "Is There a Duty of Memory? Reflections on a French Debate", 332–347, in *Modern Judaism* 30.3 (2010): 337, and H. Tristam Engelhardt, Jr., "Beyond the Best Interests of Children: Four Views of the Family and of Foundational Disagreements Regarding Pediatric Decision Making", 499–517, in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 34.5 (2010): 511.

[181] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 729.

transcendence.[182] In other words, for Hegel, Judaism is a religion of transcendence because of its understanding of God in monotheistic terms.[183] Thus, according to Hegel, spirituality and morality can be placed together in Judaism as a feature which incorporates them in a spiritual unity.

Baur though takes his explanation a little further by pointing out the distinctive feature which separates Judaism from Paganism, and especially from the Greek religion. To be sure, Baur explains, in Judaism the unity between the ideal and the real remain an external reality—namely external to humanity and thus external to nature—so the being of God is totally transcendent.[184] In the Greek religion though nature is considered the essential aspect of divine substance, so as this feature is so essential to the whole religion, it means that free subjectivity is to be sought in the finitude of nature and in the finitude of humanity. In other words, the Greek religion promotes the belief that divinity manifests itself as free subjectivity in the finitude of nature and of the human being, an idea which is also present in Hegel.[185] This is why, Baur continues, the Greek religion is the religion of beauty because finitude and nature are both transfigured and glorified "in the spirit"; to be sure, finitude and nature are signs of the spirit.[186] It is interesting to see how Baur characterizes the Greek religion—within Hegelian lines—as a religion of aesthetics, because there is really no other label which could be attached to it. The Greek religion is preoccupied with beauty because what humanity perceives as beauty lies within its natural scope.[187] Whatever is appropriated as beauty by the human being needs to exist within nature, so aesthetics is most fundamentally natural in the Greek religion. Baur's conviction is built on Hegel's idea that, in the Greek religion, the natural and material expression of beauty—as in poetry or art—cannot be detached from the service to God, because it is beauty, not doctrine, which defines ancient Greek religious thought:[188]

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[182] This transcendence, however, is not ontological, but spiritual, since the world emerges as having been endowed with the characteristics of holiness based on Judaism's view of God. See Michael Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew. The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2003), 55.

[183] See also Michael N. Forster, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1998), 28.

[184] This is in total disagreement with Hegel, but in line with Kierkegaard's critique against Hegel. See Kurt F. Reinhardt, *Germany, 2000 Years*, Volume 2: The Second Empire and the Weimar Republic (New York, NY: Continuum, 1950, reprinted 1989), 595.

[185] Compare David Fergusson, "Hegel", 58–75, in David Fergusson (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 66, and Taylor, *Hegel*, 477.

[186] For the concept of transfiguration in religion, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 43–44.

[187] Compare William Desmond, *Art, Origins, Otherness. Between Philosophy and Art* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 102–103.

> In Greek life (…) poetry, the thinking imagination, is itself the essential service of God. (…) There is here no fixed, spiritually definite doctrinal system, no doctrine; we have not truth as such in the form of thought; on the contrary, we see the divine in this immanent connection with reality, and hence always raising itself up anew and producing itself in and out of this reality.[189]

Aesthetics can be connected with the idea of God but even so remains essentially anchored in the reality of nature, and this is because divinity is seen through the materiality of nature. Greek Gods are copies of the human being, so whatever form beauty takes in nature—regardless of whether it is seen in relationships with divinity of not—is essentially a feature of the world, materiality, and finitude.[190] It is within human grasp to see and then to evaluate beauty, but this is possible only because the Greek religion places divinity and thus the idea of the spirit in the finitude of nature. The Greek religion is concerned with beauty because it can be seen in nature and because Gods themselves can be equally seen in nature.[191] This is why the Greek religion cannot ignore aesthetics; aesthetics is an integrative part of religion for any form of Greek thought whatsoever.[192]

Baur emphasizes that Judaism places a huge gap between God and nature; there is a split between the two concepts, which in Paganism is nonexistent. In the Greek religion, as exemplification of Paganism, the transcendental existence of God which is so characteristic of Judaism is replaced by the immanence between God and the world. In other words, for the Greeks, the unity between God and the world or between divinity and finitude is the unity of nature itself, as in Hegel, which points to the divine character of humanity and especially of its spirit.[193] Baur though points out that, in the Greek religion, the unity between divinity and nature does not become the unity between divinity and humanity. The immediate consequence of such unity is that the true idea of divinity disappears in nature and finitude.

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[188] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 140–141.

[189] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 272.

[190] The Greek gods depopulated heaven in order to return to earth as proof of the progress of the self-awareness of the spirit. See Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 174.

[191] See also Brian K. Etter, *Between Transcendence and Historicism. The Ethical Nature of the Arts in Hegelian Aesthetics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 61–63, and Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology*, 234.

[192] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 729.

By contrast, in Judaism, the idea of divinity does not dissipate in nature but emerges as "the pure idea of God" according to Baur, so—in philosophical terms pointing straight to Hegel[194]—this particular idea of God is pure subjectivity devoid of any senses whatsoever.[195] This is why, for Baur, the Greek religion and Judaism cannot be placed at the same level; to be sure, the paganism of the Greek religion is based on the unity between divinity and nature, while the transcendence of Judaism promotes the pure idea of God, and these two concepts simply cannot go hand in hand.[196] Judaism should be understood as a distinct religion of "unnatural" constitution which, although squeezed between the naturalness of Egyptian and Greek religions, stands on its own in all respects. This explains why Baur is convinced that, when compared with Paganism, Judaism should not be analyzed in parallel with various forms of Paganism but rather with Paganism in general. In order for this comparison to work properly, Paganism itself must be defined through one general concept. In Hegel, this comparison is possible through the juxtaposition of the Jewish religion and the confinement of the idea of natural religion.[197]

Hegel, Baur points out, seems to be quite interested in the relationship between Judaism and Paganism, and the concept of natural religion plays an important role in the whole enterprise. When Hegel investigates how Judaism can be compared with Paganism, he singles out the distinctiveness of Judaism, which utterly rejects every attempt to sensualize God's being.[198] In other words,

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[193] Compare Hodgson "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel", 81–122, in Smart, Clayton, Sherry, and Katz (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the West*, 97.

[194] More information about "the pure idea of God" in Hegel, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 228.

[195] For details about how God can be subjectively known in Judaism, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 82–83.

[196] For the relationship between Judaism and the Greek religion, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 125–126.

[197] A condensed, though illuminating, analysis of Hegel's idea of "natural religion" can be read in Thomas A. Lewis, "Religion and Demythologization in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*", 192–209, in Dean Moyar and Michael Quante (eds.), *Hegel*'s Phenomenology of the Spirit. *A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 197–198.

[198] Details about Paganism and Judaism in Hegel can be found in Philip Beitchman, *Alchemy of the Word. Cabala of the Renaissance* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 53.

Judaism works with a concept of God which is thought to be so transcendent that human senses are not part of his being. This leads to a sheer separation between God and nature, which turns Judaism in a distinct religion of transcendence. The essential unity between God and nature, which lies at the very core of Paganism, is staunchly dismissed by Judaism as some sort of vilification of God's being. This is why, in Judaism, the actual existence of God is considered utterly distinct from the existence of nature.[199] The idea of being as attached to God cannot exist in connection with the reality of nature, so Judaism is indeed the religion of transcendence which sharply distinguishes between God and the factual existence of nature in the materiality of the world.[200]

As far as Baur is concerned, the separation between God and nature in Judaism leads to a positive concept of God.[201] This is because, in Hegelian terms, since God is totally separated from the reality of the material world, he can only exist as spirit. Unlike Paganism in all its forms, where God is strongly connected with nature and is to be found in the materiality of the world, in Judaism the perspective on God is totally different: nature has its own existence as confined to God's creation, while God himself is to be found in the realm of the spirit, which is conceived as a separate objective reality that exists beyond creation, a theory Hegel was not willing to incorporate in his own understanding of religion.[202] As spirit, the God of Judaism is a self-aware spirit or, as Baur puts it, a free personal being that defines itself.[203] When it comes to defining God as a self-aware spirit with personal consciousness, one has to inquire into how a relationship is possible between God and the individual personality of the human being. This relationship between God and man is a matter of revelation and, as Baur is fully aware of this, he mentions that man can be known to the God of Judaism in as much as there is a specific religious awareness that man displays towards God's revelation.[204] To be sure, man is able to be aware of God in so far as he understands his personality—or rather his personhood—as opposed to nature. In other words, the personality to which Baur makes reference here is both God's and man's, because in Hegel, the spirit is concrete and it manifests itself as a human being:[205]

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[199] Consequently, according to Hegel's criticism, Judaism neglects and downplays the role of nature in religion. See Julius Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1978), 95.

[200] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 730–731.

[201] Baur is right, because a positive concept of God is anti-Hegelian. See, for instance, the theology of Franz Rosenzweig. See Welz, *Love's Transcendence and the Problem of Theodicy*, 185. Consequently, a negative concept of God is Hegelian; for example, God is seen as infinite (or non-finite) as opposed to finite, as in Lauer, *Hegel's Concept of God*, 163.

[202] See Desmond, *Hegel's God*, 122–123.

[203] The idea of a free and personal being applied to God and, at the same time, separate from the reality of man's individuality is essentially theistic and anti-Hegelian. See Arno Böhler, "Theism", 348–349, in Erwin Fahlbusch (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, Volume 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, and Leiden: Brill, 2008), 348.

> The concrete spirit supplies the deficiency, and this deficiency is that subjectivity is wanting, that is to say, spirituality or the spiritual element. Here at the stage of natural religion, however, this spirituality does not yet exist as such, is not yet thought-out spirituality, universal spirituality, but sensuous, immediate spirituality; here it is a man, as sensuous, external, immediate spirituality, and therefore in the form of the spiritual life of a definite human being, of an empirical, individual consciousness.[206]

Man needs to be aware to the same extent that his own personality, as well as God's, needs to be considered in terms which suggest an opposition to nature. This is evident in Baur since he sees both God and man as manifestations of the spirit. God is spirit and man is spirit, so while in natural religions the relationship between man and God is purely natural, in Judaism the same relationship should be viewed as purely spiritual because both God and man manifest themselves as free beings. Thus, the free personality and personhood of God enters a relationship with the free personality and personhood of man, so it is—as Baur explains—a "relationship between the spirit and the spirit", which makes God and man the one and same ontological reality.[207] The religious awareness involved in such relationship between God and man should not be viewed as unmediated because, in Baur, Judaism is a religion which—as a result of its historical development—promotes a form of mediated religious awareness. In Paganism, man's religious awareness is mediated through nature, so man's awareness of the divine is a natural awareness. When it comes to Judaism, the mediation of religious awareness needs to be discussed from a different angle. In the religious system of Judaism, the mediation provided by man's natural awareness is replaced by the awareness of the people or the awareness of the state.[208] In other words, in Judaism it is not natural awareness which mediates man's connection with God, but rather popular or state awareness. Thus, in Judaism, man is aware of his relationship with God through the mediation provided by the "community of God".[209] In other words, man is aware of God in as much as he is a member of the people or the state which he belongs to, but—as Hegel indicates—this feeling of belonging to a state did not prevent the Jews "that God essentially exists for thought alone".[210]

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[204] For an interesting discussion about revelation in Hegel and how it influences the notion of God, especially as seen in Judaism and in opposition with Christianity, see Gideon Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 53.

[205] See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 392.

[206] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 56.

[207] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Holy Spirit and Salvation. The Sources of Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 247.

The Jews not only have a relationship with God, but they can also conceptually picture a very close relationship to God precisely because they belong to the people or the state "of God".[211] This is why Baur points out that, while in Paganism God reveals himself in nature, in Judaism God reveals himself in history.[212] It is not history in general or history as the totality of events that happen in the world, but rather the history which is associated with God's revelation. In other words, Judaism is based on the conviction that God reveals himself in the history of a certain nation, which begins as a "family history" and this is what mediates man's religious awareness of God[213] as part of a distinct ethnic group.[214]

In Judaism, according to Baur, the nation is connected with the historical development of the state, so the nation as the state represents the actuality of nature in its relationship with God, an issue which is not foreign to Hegel. The individual member of the Jewish nation is aware of his relationship with God and therefore is able to know God in as much as he belongs to the community which lives based on the Mosaic law.[215] The Jewish state itself must be organized according to the law of Moses in order for the state to be able to mediate the people's relationship with God in all aspects of their lives.[216] The very content of the Jew's religious awareness depends on the organization of the state based on the law of Moses.[217] Thus, the necessary form of the mediation between God and humanity is realized, in the specific case of Judaism, through the agency of the Jewish state which has to be shaped in all respects by the norms of the Mosaic law.[218] The principle though on which religious awareness is based in Judaism is reflection, which in Baur is seen as the work of human understanding. While Paganism anchors its religious awareness on opinion and perception, Judaism is founded on man's capacity to understand natural reality, but also his relationship with God, according to the guidance provided by understanding.[219]

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[208] In Hegel's understanding of Judaism, ethnicity is fundamental for its religion. See Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Secularism and Religion in the Modern/Colonial World-System: From Secular Postcoloniality to Postsecular Transmodernity", 360–384, in Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (eds.), *Coloniality at Large. Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 371.

[209] More about Hegel's connection between the community of God and the state (this time the modern state, not its ancient Jewish counterpart), see William Desmond, "Between Finitude and Infinity: On Hegel's Sublationary Infinitism", 115–140, in Slavoj Žižek, Clayton Crockett, and Creston Davis (eds.), *Hegel and the Infinite. Religion, Politics and Dialectic* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 124–125.

[210] For details, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 70 and 125.

[211] The people of God in Judaism are characterized by obedience and slavery, both features which lack reason. See also Taylor, *Hegel*, 497.

[212] Compare Moses Hess, *The Revival of Israel. Rome and Jerusalem, the Last Nationalist Question* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994, previously published in English 1943), 28.

[213] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 731–732.

[214] Jewish ethnicity and especially the Jew's ethnic awareness caused problems even within the early Christian church, which seems to have split between two factions: Jewish (led by Peter) and Hellenistic (overseen by Paul). See Coleman A. Baker, "Early Christian Identity Formation: From Ethnicity and Theology to Socio-Narrative Criticism", 228–237, in *Currents in Biblical Research* 9.2 (2011): 229.

Man's capacity for reflection manifests itself through the externalization of understanding and, in doing so, man realizes that he is able to differentiate and separate amongst the various aspects of reality. This is what generated the distinction between God and nature in Judaism, Baur points out in agreement with Hegel, so the image of God cannot be found in nature.[220] The image of man is not to be sought in nature, but rather in man.[221] In Judaism, man is considered an intelligent and personal being, and it is this image of man which speaks about the God of the Jews. The specificity of Judaism as a religion of reflection and understanding resides in the actual type of relationship which it posits between God and man. This is why Baur underlines again that the relationship between God and man in Judaism is a relationship which works between two free persons. Despite its dependence on God,[222] man is able to live "against God" in total freedom; in other words, man is able to position his life in a way which can be described as being opposed to God's requirements due to his innate capacity to act as a free person. Thus, in light of his total freedom, man is entitled to assert his own will in his relationship with God, although in Judaism, Baur believes, the Mosaic law works as a contract between God and man with specific rights and obligations assigned to each part, as in Hegel,[223] as representations of individual freedom.[224] This means that while professing man's total freedom in his relationship with God, Judaism is based on the conviction that man and God enter a covenant which regulates the particularities of their relationship. The ordinary Jew, however, should be fully aware that the validity of his relationship with God is given by his obedience to the Mosaic law, which stipulates how he should relate himself to God and how God promises to act upon his life.[225]

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[215] For details about the Mosaic law in Hegel, see Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, 17.

[216] Compare Taylor, *Hegel*, 62.

[217] More details about the Mosaic law and its relationship with the Jewish state, in Ido Geiger, *The Founding Act of Modern Ethical Life. Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 101.

[218] The intention of the Mosaic law is to draw people closer to a God which is separate from them and, in so doing, it pushes people away from their innate relationship with nature. See also Timo J.M. Slootweg, "Love and Violence: Dialectical Reflections on the Phenomenology of the Crusade", 223–256, in Bart C. Labushagne and Reinhard W. Sonnenschmidt (eds.), *Religion, Politics, and Law. Philosophical Reflections on the Sources of Normative Order in Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 232.

[219] Hegel is a bit more critical than Baur since for him Judaism (and Christianity for that matter) is a "slave religion". See Robert C. Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism. The Existentialists and Their Nineteenth-Century Backgrounds* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 42.

[220] In Hegel, this implies that man is able to exercise his will over nature. See also Martin D. Yaffe, "Introduction", 1–72, in Martin D. Yaffe (ed.), *Judaism and Environmental Ethics. A Reader* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 38.

Baur is very concerned to underline that the relationship between God and man in Judaism is fundamentally external, which is also Hegel's view of the core of the Jewish religion.[226] It is important though to define what Baur means by the externality of the relationship between God and man in the Jewish religion. To begin with, he indicates that God's will is considered the norm of moral actions, and this is exactly what constitutes the external character of the relationship between God and man. This is so because despite the normative character of God's will for man's morality, man himself is not able to see in God the unique and absolute principle of his spiritual and moral-religious life. It appears that the reason Baur sees things this way has to do with God's utter transcendence, which is also true for Hegel.[227] Thus, although God himself and his will is the actual norm of man's morality in Judaism, man is still incapable of perceiving God as the source of his morality, spirituality, and religion. The distance between him and God is too big; man lives in nature while God exists beyond it,[228] so there is no effective connection between the two realms which could somehow connect the morality of God's will and the moral actions of man's life.[229] This is why Baur points out that God's will should be seen as an external authority of man's life and morality which is revealed "in the form of the law".

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[221] Compare Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism*, 70–71.

[222] For details about Hegel's perspective on man's dependence, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 1 Teil, 291.

[223] Details about Hegel's understanding of the idea of contract, which prompts God's people to fear and serve God, can be found in Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 84.

[224] Rights point not only to freedom, but also to social standing. See Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition", 105–142, in *International Theory* 3.1 (2011): 110.

[225] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 732–733.

[226] Hegel is quite caustic when it comes to defining the external character of Judaism. See Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, 95–96.

It is clear that, according to Baur, God's will as the norm for man's morality is mediated through the law, but the absoluteness of God's will can sometimes stand in opposition with the way man understands the precepts of the law. Thus—as it becomes clear in Hegel—a contradiction can arise between God's will as existent in divine transcendence beyond the world and God's law as understood by man in the immanence of the world.[230] Consequently, Baur shows that this dialectical nature of Judaism which shifts between God's transcendence and man's immanence—or between God's will and God's law—is what makes Judaism a religion of reflexive understanding, a religion of authority, and a religion of the law. This conviction of Baur's matches Hegel's belief that the faith of the Jews, who so strongly demand a relationship with God, needs a distinct organization:[231]

> The people has its own peculiar nationality, and consists of certain families and the members of these. This privilege of belonging to the people, and consequently of standing to God in this relation, rests on birth. This naturally demands a special constitution, special laws, ceremonies, and worship.[232]

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[227] See also Kelley, *Racializing Jesus*, 58.

[228] Baur's dissatisfaction with this model is similar to Hegel's, because if God exists beyond nature, human morality is severely impaired. This is why man's morality should not be anchored in a transcendent God, but in principles which are conditioned historically and socially. See Mark J. Cherry, "Sex, Abortion, and Infanticide: The Gulf between the Secular and the Divine", 25–46, in *Christian Bioethics* 17.1 (2011): 42, n. 31.

[229] According to Hegel, in Judaism God becomes alienated from the natural realm of humanity. See Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel*, 30.

[230] See also Dow Magnus, *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit*, 195.

[231] For more information about how the law works with the idea of authority in the religion of transcendence, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 70–71.

[232] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 198.

Although and sometimes despite God's actual will for human life, man's own capacity to understand and reflect upon the law as the source of authority for his moral life appears to prevail over the spiritual absoluteness of God's will. The external character of Judaism is reinforced even further by the fact that the law is utterly external to man. The law is an external authority,[233] and not a higher principle as faith is, for instance, in the Christian religion. For Baur, the externality of the Jewish law places the whole religion outside the sphere of the spirit—regardless whether the spirit is considered absolute or finite—while in Christianity the finite spirit of humanity has faith as the source for moral conduct.[234] Such understanding of Judaism prompts Baur to place it at the same level as Islam, because in both religions the external character of their authority is given by the external authority of the person through whom God revealed his law (Moses in Judaism and Mohammed in Islam, although Baur does not mention their actual names).[235]

Baur though does not elaborate on a possible relationship between Judaism and Islam apart from mentioning the authority of the persons which mediated God's revelation through documents that acquired the status of law for their adherents.[236] What he does instead is to say that there is a connection between Judaism and Christianity, which has to do with the concept of authority.[237] According to Baur, who does not depart from Hegel in this issue, authority is the principle which is able to demonstrate, at the same time, that there is an opposition between Judaism and Christianity, but also that the two religions can find themselves in a relationship of convergence. It is quite clear that, while Judaism and Christianity are brought together by the very concept of authority and tradition, which follows naturally from it, the two religions are clearly separated by their understanding of authority itself.[238] In fact, Baur suggests that Judaism distinguishes itself from Christianity based on its conviction that the authority of the law and the subsequent tradition is the most important aspect of man's relationship with God. For Baur, who agrees with Hegel in this respect, the "weight" of authority—law and tradition put together—suppresses the freedom of the spirit; in particular, the individual Jew is simply crushed by the burden of the law and tradition, so he is no longer able to function as a finite spirit whose freedom should have gone beyond the boundaries of the law and tradition.[239]

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[233] For the external character of the Jewish law in Hegel, compare William Rasch, *Sovereignty and Its Discontents. On the Primacy of Conflict and the Structure of the Political* (Portland, OR: Birbeck Law Press/Cavendish Publishing, 2004), 125–126.

[234] Details about the externality or internality of the law—but also of punishment—in religion, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 25.

[235] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 733.

[236] See also Oliver Leaman, *Jewish Thought. An Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 19.

[237] The fear of God or rather reverence for God is the foundation for authority in Judaism and Christianity. See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 348.

[238] See Peter McEnhill and George Newlands, *Fifty Key Christian Thinkers* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 117.

The true problem here is that the reality of the finite individual spirit is hindered from approaching the spirituality of God seen as absolute spirit; no real connection is possible because of the authority which is given to the law and tradition. This is why, it is Baur's conviction that Judaism turned into a purely external religious mechanism, which made it impossible for Christianity to share any common features with Judaism, as Hegelian thought points out.[240] Like Hegel, Baur sees no liaison between the two; in fact, he points out that not even a mere transition can be identified between the two religions. Judaism seems to have a problem with itself in the sense that, as Baur points out, the theoretical aspects of its doctrine appear to be in sheer contradiction with its practical manifestation. To be exact, the message of the prophets clearly indicated that the law is not merely an external reality, but also an internal power because the tenets of the law were not supposed to remain on the stone tablets only; on the contrary, Baur writes, they should have been embraced, internalized, and thus inscribed on the people's living hearts because, as Hegel shows, in Judaism laws are given directly to the Jewish people by God himself in his capacity of creator of the whole universe:[241]

> There is this particular nation which honors him, and so he is the God of his nation, its Lord, in fact. It is he who is known as the creator of heaven and earth, he has set bounds and limits for everything and bestowed on everything its peculiar nature, and so too he has given to man his proper place and his rights. This expresses the characterization according to which he as lord gives his people laws, laws which have to do with the entire sphere of their actions, both the universal laws, the Ten Commandments—which are the universal, ethical, legal, fundamental,

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[239] Compare Laurence Dickey, *Hegel. Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 175.

[240] Hegel's distinction between Judaism and Christianity was taken over—among others—by Ernst Troeltsch and Paul Tillich. See Jan Rohls, "Judaism and Islam in Modern Protestant Theology", 139–151, in Nili Cohen and Andreas Heldrich (eds.), *The Three Religions. Interdisciplinary Conference of Tel Aviv University and Munich University, Venice, October 2000* (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2002), 149–150.

[241] For the subjective character of Judaism in Hegel, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 82–83.

> characteristics of lawgiving and morality, and which are not held to be laws given by reason, but rather laws written down by God—and also all the rest of the state laws and regulations.[242]

In Judaism, however, only the first aspect became a religious reality, Baur ascertains, namely the external aspect of the law, while the second—the internalization of the law—seems to have been choked to extinction. As the law remained exclusively a matter of external religious affairs, the principle of authority in Judaism lost its power, so the letter of the law became more important than the spirit of the law.[243] The letter of the law turned into what was supposed to be the spirit of the law, so the spirit of the law was cancelled by the letter of the law. Consequently, Baur explains, a veil was placed over the whole law when—to use the interpretation of the New Testament and, evidently, of Christianity (2 Corinthians 3:13) about a key aspect of Judaism (Exodus 34:33)—Moses covered his face and thus a partition or a separation wall was erected between the letter and the spirit of the law. This way, in Judaism, the spirit could never achieve the true and living unity with the law.[244]

Following the presentation of Paganism and Judaism, Baur proceeds with a very brief—and annoyingly disproportionate—analysis of Christianity. According to Baur, Christianity stands in the line of historical development of religion starting with Paganism and then with Judaism, as in Hegel.[245] To sum up, Paganism is the religion of opinion and intuition, Judaism the religion of reflection and understanding; this leaves Christianity to be described as the religion of reason, which is also true from Hegel's perspective.[246] One can easily see a progression from Paganism to Judaism and then to Christianity, which also reflects the gradual and upward transition from opinion and intuition to reflection and understanding, then finally to the full use of reason, which reveals that, in Baur, history is a progressive movement that does not repeat its earlier stages.[247] It is interesting to notice Baur's choice of words when he presents Christianity; thus, having indicated that Paganism is based on opinion and intuition while Judaism focuses on reflection and understanding, he says that "consequently, Christianity can only be the religion of reason".[248] This discloses Baur's idealistic approach to Christianity—which, of course, stems from Hegel's religious philosophy—that sees Christianity as the absolute religion,[249] standing above all other religious forms as manifested in Paganism and Judaism.[250]

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[242] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 2, 210–211.

[243] Baur agrees with Hegel again, because Hegel perceives Judaism as a threat to the free progress of the spirit as well as to philosophy. See David Nirenberg, "The Judaism of Christian Art", 387–428, in Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (eds.), *Judaism and Christian Art. Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 413–414.

[244] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 733–734.

[245] See also Jon Bartley Stewart, *The Hegel Myths and Legends* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 115.

[246] In describing Christianity as the religion of reason, Hegel seems to have been influenced by Kant. See Simone Zurbuchen, "Religion and Society", 779–814, in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, Volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 803.

Baur shows that the absolute character of Christianity resides in its capacity to found its beliefs in reason, so Christianity is the absolute religion precisely because it is a religion of reason. At the same time, Baur points out that the absoluteness of Christianity as a religion of reason presupposes the fact that its religious awareness exists in a mediated form. He reverts to the comparison between Paganism and Judaism to illustrate this fact; thus, the mediating religious factor in Paganism is nature while in Judaism it is the theocratic state, which leaves Christianity with the history and personality of an individual human being as the core of the reality that mediates its specific religious awareness. Baur clearly refers to Jesus of Nazareth, who is not only an individual; he is also a representative of the whole of humanity, like Hegel put it.[251] Jesus is the man in itself, so he encompasses the totality of humanity in its individual existence.[252] In this respect, Jesus is the archetypal man and, as Baur later shows, the God-man who, in Hegel, represents the unity between the fragility of humanity and the infinity of divinity:[253]

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247 Baur's theory of history was borrowed from Hegel. See J.P.E. Harper-Scott, " 'Our True North': Walton's First Symphony, Sibellianism, and the Nationalization of Modernism in England", 562–589, in *Music and Letters* 89.4 (2008): 577.

248 See also Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 364.

249 Cf. Jenny Daggers, "Thinking 'Religion': The Christian Past and Interreligious Future of Religious Studies and Theology", 961–990, in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78.4 (2010): 967.

250 Compare Henrique Pinto, *Foucault, Christianity, and Interfaith Dialogue* (London: Routledge, 2003), 19.

251 See Andrew Shanks, *God and Modernity. A New and Better Way to Do Theology* (London: Routledge, 2000), 80.

252 The issue of how Jesus represents humanity is discussed in Andrew Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4ff.

253 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2 Teil, 286.

> In the church Christ has been called the God-man. This is the extraordinary combination which directly contradicts the understanding; but the unity of the divine and human natures has here been brought into human consciousness and has become a certainly for it, implying that the otherness, or, as it is also expressed, the finitude, the weakness, the frailty of human nature is not incompatible with this unity, just as in the eternal idea otherness in no way detracts from the unity which God is.[254]

As a result of this specifically Hegelian characterization of Jesus, Baur concludes that the religious awareness of Christianity is indeed mediated in a specific form, but this actual form is not accidental or external; the mediated form taken by religious awareness in Christianity is absolute. This is how Hegel's religious philosophy approaches Christianity in Baur's understanding thereof, but even more important, the history and person of the God-man Jesus, the actual reality of his individual existence as a historical person is also what constitutes the truth in itself.[255] As far as Baur is concerned, this is the very center, the essence of the new philosophy of religion, namely the fact that truth in itself can be seen to have been captured in the historical reality of the individual existence of one person;[256] in the specific case of Christianity, this person is Jesus of Nazareth, but as he is archetypically representative for the whole of humanity, the new philosophy of religion works with the conviction that truth in itself dwells in every human being.[257] God and man, therefore, are part of the same ontological reality, which can be investigated rationally,[258] so religion is man's rational/Gnostic attempt to understand the relationship between God and man (spirit and matter) throughout the temporal unfolding of human history. In short, following his reading of Hegel, Baur was ready to embrace Christian theology not only as religion or a religious manifestation of Gnosis as he saw in Böhme, but also as philosophy or a Gnostic (i.e. dualistic and rationalistic) religious philosophy permanently embedded in the history of humankind.

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[254] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, 76–77.

[255] See also Murray Rae, *Kierkegaard and Theology* (London: Continuum, 2010), 37–38.

[256] Compare Jennifer A. Bates, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 147.

[257] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 734–735.

[258] Hegel's position is hopelessly optimistic since God's being can be so easily incorporated in man's existence. See also Sebastian Gardner, "Sartre, Schelling, and Onto-Theology", 247–271, in *Religious Studies* 42.3 (2006): 265.

Concluding Remarks

Baur's Synthesis of Böhme and Hegel: Gnosis as a Christian Philosophy of Religion in History

Baur managed to put Böhme and Hegel together in a synthesis which helped him capture the Gnostic essence of Christianity as religion. In other words, Christianity is a religion like any other religion in the world, which developed historically and should be conceptually understood based on the idea of Gnosis as a juxtaposition of religion/theology (which is dualistic) and philosophy (which is rationalistic). This is why Baur's perspective on Gnosis is essentially and fundamentally historical. Baur's historical awareness, which he consistently applies to the study of Gnosis, establishes the fact that Gnosis went through a series of polemics, which were triggered by the teachers of the church (the Church Fathers). The clash between Gnosis and the formal teaching of the Christian church resulted in a series of questions, which—as Baur himself points out—were set in motion by this polemic.[1]

These questions were eventually given a solution by the various Gnostic systems. The solution, however, was given in a way which could no longer satisfy religious awareness. What Baur wants to underline here is the fact that, while the old Gnostic systems came up with a solution which answered various questions in the old church, that particular solution was no longer valid in his time. Thus, all these questions resulting in the conflict between Gnosis and church orthodoxy are no longer an issue of doctrine, as much as a question of religious philosophy.

Consequently, religious philosophy—a phrase used by Baur to designate the new philosophy of religion that developed at the twilight of the Reformation—must strive to realize its very concept, so it must be aware of its task, which is constantly to turn to the reference point of the old Gnosis. Baur sets for himself, as well as for his study of Gnosis, a fundamental relationship between the old Gnosis and the new philosophy of religion in all its major manifestations, so that a clear distinction can be drawn between its new intellectual perspective and what happened before and during the time of the Reformation when, according to Baur, the world was dominated by the old philosophy of religion.

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[1] See also Michael D. Calabria, *Florence Nightingale in Egypt and Greece. Her Diary and "Visions"* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 29.

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Gnosis and the Old Philosophy of Religion

It is therefore in this particular context, as mentioned in the Introduction, that Baur exemplifies what he means by the new philosophy of religion and in so doing he lists four systems of thought,[2] specifically those promoted by Böhme,[3] Schelling,[4] Schleiermacher,[5] and Hegel.[6] Of these four, however, only Hegel qualifies as Baur's favorite philosopher primarily because, unlike Schelling and Schleiermacher, he went deeper in his investigation of the complex connections between Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. At the same time, Böhme seems to be perceived by Baur as the *radix* which inspired all four in no longer seeing God based on a certain revelation, but rather on how the world exists and works as material reality. Baur also points out that while Schelling and Schleiermacher dealt with the notion of God from the standpoint of man's subjectivity and feelings, Hegel was preoccupied in establishing a firm ground in God's objectivity and his capacity to become a human spirit as a basis for any theological inquiry.[7] Consequently, one can refer to the period preceding them as the "old philosophy of religion", which includes Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Reformation.

For Baur—due do his sharp historical awareness—the idea of Gnosticism, as well as its pluriform manifestations, remains a fundamental reality through the whole of church history. It seems that no Christian century has ever escaped the all-powerful influence of Gnosis, because what Baur wants undoubtedly to make clear is the fact that Gnosis was present as a religious reality even in the first century of the church. This is why he speaks of the "Gnosis of the first century", but also of subsequent manifestations thereof, which does not seem to have had an easy life. Gnosis was in no way peacefully accepted by the church, and this fact is indicated by Baur when he points out that the first century Gnosis "with the war it waged" had a result which lasted for quite a long time.[8] To be more precise, the result of first century Gnosis seems to have remained deeply rooted throughout the history of the Christian church; at this time, Baur underlines that the timeframe within which the result of Gnosis existed in church history extends from the very first century to the Middle Ages and even the Reformation.[9]

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[2] See Eric Voegelin, "From Political Ideas to Symbols of Experience", 89–95, in Ellis Sandoz (ed.), *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin. Autobiographical Reflections*, volume 34 (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 93.

[3] Michael Pauen, *Dithyrambiker des Untergangs. Gnostizismus in Ästhetik und Philosophie der Moderne* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 53.

[4] See Jacob Taubes, *From Cult to Culture. Fragments toward a Critique of Historical Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 118, and Day, *Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence*, 31.

[5] See Thomas Koppehl, *Der wissentschaftliche Standpunkt der Theologie Isaak August Dorners* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 64.

[6] See Jan Olof Bengtsson, "Idealism and the Pantheistic Revolution. The 'Big Picture' and Why It Is Needed", 107–132, in James Connelly, and Stamatoula Panagakou (eds.), *Anglo-American Idealism. Thinkers and Ideas* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 110.

[7] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 668.

This result of first century Gnosis did not just last through this impressive chain of centuries; as far as Baur is concerned, it is quite clear that it stayed there, in the church, as a "generally healthy and self-supporting view" which seems to have exerted a significant degree of influence throughout church history for at least sixteen centuries.[10]

Baur's historical awareness pushes him to consider Gnosticism within its historical context, and in doing so, he shows that, in the following centuries, two great religious developments occurred in close connection with Gnosticism. The first religious development with which Baur connects Gnosticism is in close relationship with it, while the second had considerable consequences on the result of the conflict between first century Gnosis and church orthodoxy. To make things clear, Baur explains that the first religious development is Manichaeism,[11] while the second is Augustinianism.

It is important to notice here that, as far as Baur is concerned, Gnosticism and Manichaeism find themselves in a very close relationship, so it is critical to treat them accordingly because Manichaeism can provide us with important clues concerning the definition and development of Gnosticism.[12] Baur admits that Manichaeism lies outside the sphere in which the Gnostics themselves existed, but at the same time it originates within the same religious background. The resemblance between Gnosticism and Manichaeism is so evident to Baur that he defines Manichaeism as an "analogous" religious manifestation of Gnosticism.[13] The proof that Gnosticism and Manichaeism are related is evident in the history of religion, Baur contends, because a new individual development of religious awareness causes a new form of religion. It is not clear whether Baur refers to Gnosticism as the origin of Manichaeism, but he does point out that the new form of religion considers itself the absolute religion in contrast with the already existing historical religions. At the same time, the new form of religion repeats itself, so it manifests itself as a religion with absolute claims over religious awareness.[14]

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[8] For details about the conflicts which erupted between the various religious parties in the first centuries, see Gerd Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1999, reprinted 2003), 249–250.

[9] See also David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit. Jacob Boehme's Influence on Hegel", 15–35, in Robert L. Perkins (ed.), *History and System. Hegel's Philosophy of History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 22.

[10] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 544.

[11] For a competent discussion about whether Gnosticism includes Manichaeism or they are to be seen as independent religions, see Nicholas J. Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism. An Ancient Faith Rediscovered* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 15.

[12] See also Alexander Böhlig, "Die Bedeutung der Funde von Medinet Madi und Nag Hammadi für die Erforschung des Gnostizismus", 113–242, in Alexander Böhling, Christoph Markschies, *Gnosis und Manichäismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 113.

Gnosis and Manichaeism

Concerning Manichaeism, Baur singles out some basic characteristics which define it as a religion. First, he mentions that Manichaeists take very much after the Gnostics, especially in Christology, even though Gnostics had the same approach as the Manichaeists.[15] For instance, as Baur plainly explains, Mani—obviously the founder of Manichaeism—used to place himself in Christ's shoes, to the point that he believed that he himself was Christ. In so doing, he believed that he was the Paraclete who represented Christ and did the work of Christ. He was also convinced that the very consciousness of the Paraclete spoke to him directly and without mediation, so his religion represented the absolute truth.[16] This is exactly why, Baur further explains, that Manichaeism placed itself in the same type of relationship with earlier religions as Gnosticism. As a result, Manichaeism must have contemplated the same common ground as Gnosticism, in the sense that they both adopted a dualistic religious form. It is Baur's conviction that Manichaeism renewed and developed the dualism which can be found in Gnosticism.

Nevertheless, the relationship between Manichaeism and other, earlier religions was not smooth. For instance, Baur expresses his conviction that the more determined Manichaeism was to hold on to its claim of being the absolute religion, the harsher its relationship with other religions must have been. According to Baur, Manichaeism had many things in common with Gnosticism in general, but the Gnostic manifestation which Manichaeism came closest to was Marcionism.[17] Manichaeism, however, shared with Marcionism what Baur calls a "double difference" and an "opposition" or a "contrast". Concerning the double difference, Baur points out that whatever was subjective for Marcion[18] was purely objective for Mani[19] and viceversa; while the opposition consists of placing different realities in contrast to each other. For example, while

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[13] For a perspective which supports the existence of certain connections between Gnosticism and Manichaeism, see Guy Stroumsa, *A New Science. The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 123.

[14] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 544–545.

[15] Christ is not the only person with whom Mani is compared; Zarathustra and Muhammad also serve as elements for such a comparison. See L.J.A. Ort, *Mani. A Religio-Historical Description of His Pesonality* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 5.

[16] See also Eugen Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), 58.

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[17] For more details about the connection between Manichaeism and Marcionism, see Robert C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Cheshire, CT: Biblo and Tannen, 1972), 167.

[18] Marcion (85–160) is primarily known for his rejection of Judaism, which led him to propose a Biblical canon which excluded the entire Old Testament, plus the writings of the New Testament which had a "Jewish" flavor, such as the synoptic Gospels and some epistles, but without the Pauline writings. Based on his conviction that the idea of god must be considered in dualistic terms, Marcion accepted the existence of what he called "the two gods": first, the god of the Old Testament, the creator of matter and the universe, and second the Heavenly Father, or the god of the New Testament. He saw Jesus as the very incarnation of the latter god. While the god of the Old Testament was exclusivist and hateful, as he was interested solely in the situation of Jews, the god of the New Testament was full of love towards all humanity, so his inclusive attitude made him the advocate of all people. This is why Marcion accepted only a modified version of the Gospel of Luke and the epistles attributed to the apostle Paul. For details about Marcion and his religious system, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts. A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006). Baur was convinced that the Gospel of Luke was a second-century Christian writing, so it was natural for Marcion to use it since Marcion and the author of Luke's Gospel, who "falsely identified himself with Luke", could have been contemporaries. See Michael B. Thompson, "Paul in the Book of Acts: Differences and Distance", 425–436, in *Expository Times* 122.9 (2011): 427.

[19] Mani (216–275) founded Manichaeism in an attempt to find salvation through a range of attitudes which included education, chastity, fasting, and the denial of one's self. The world is profoundly material and characterized by the dualism of good and evil, which fight a constant and endless war. He considered himself the Paraclete of God, which was spoken of in the New Testament, so he saw himself as a prophet in a long line which contains famous names such as Enoch, Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. His religious system was based on a fundamental distinction between those considered the elect and those believed to be only auditors. What is distinctive about Manichaeism and its differentiation between the elect and auditors is the fact that the latter hope to become elect in a subsequent life, through incarnation or metempsychosis. Details about Mani can be found in L.J.R. Ort, *Mani. A Religio-Historical Description of his Personality* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967).

Marcion[20] saw a sharp contrast between the visible and the invisible,[21] which is an indication that he accepted both the visible world and an invisible reality, Mani restricted his religious thoughts to the visible world, by setting light in opposition to darkness.[22]

It is clear for Baur that Marcionism and Manichaeism stay in a very close relationship, and what is even clearer for him is the fact that Manichaeism itself has strong connections with what he calls "the old religion of nature".[23] When it comes to Gnosticism, and particularly to identifying a link between Gnosticism and Manichaeism, Baur contends that, in this respect, Manichchaeism shares some connections with Gnosticism and especially with its Valentinian branch, founded by Valentinus.[24] Baur concludes that Manichaeism stands between Valentinianism and Marcionism, as both Valentinus (100–160) and Marcion (85–160) lived as contemporaries, although Mani himself founded Manichaeism two centuries later (216–276). Baur also points out that Manichaeism is rather the pure dualistic system of Valentinus thought—although modified—as well as a pure accomplishment of an objectively conceived dualism.[25] This is why Baur is convinced that Manichaeism comes very close to the teaching of Basilides (85–145).[26] There is a significant difference, however, between Manichaeism and Basilides' system which has to do with the fact that, in Manichaeism, Paganism replaces Christianity.[27] It is not very easy to understand what Baur has in mind when he points to this distinction between Manichaeism and the teaching of Basilides, but it may have to do with the idea of metempsychosis.[28] Both Mani and Basilides believed in the transmigration of the soul, which is some kind of reincarnation.[29] There is, however, an important distinction between the two in the sense that, while

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[20] Marcion caught Baur's attention because of the former's interested in Luke's Gospel. See Dieter T. Roth, "Marcion's Gospel and Luke: The History of Research in Current Debate", 513–527, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.3 (2008): 515–516.

[21] For an interesting discussion about Marcionism and Manichaeism and their relationship with Gnostic thought, see Martin Seymour-Smith, *Hardy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994), 619–620.

[22] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 545–546.

[23] For details about Manichaeism as a religion of nature, which is also noticed by Adolf von Harnack, see Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Volume 4 (New York, NY: Cosimo, 2007), 26.

[24] Valentinus (100–160) founded a branch of Gnosticism which appears to have affected primarily the churches of the West. His belief system is based on the idea of *pleroma*, which is the highest deity and issues aeons in pairs. The last offspring of these pairs of aeons—so the son of the lowest of aeons—is called Sophia or Wisdom. Sophia is the Demiurge, the God that created the whole universe but also the God of the Old Testament. It is interesting to notice that Valentinus used the term *hypostasis* as referring to the idea of godhead. Thus, Valentinian Gnosticism is said to have spoken of God as the Father, Son, and Sophia or God the Father, Sophia the Mother, and Logos the Son. The salvation of humanity is achieved by Christ, who is an aeon and who united himself to Jesus of Nazareth, the man of Palestine, at his baptism. Christ is the one who brings Gnosis to humanity, but only the pneumatics (or the Valentinians) are capable of understanding and accepting it. Valentinianism is based on the idea of pure spirit, because only pure spirits can enter the *pleroma*. When a pure spirit becomes part of the *pleroma*, then salvation has been achieved by that particular spirit. See, for details, Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple. Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 247.

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[25] See also Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion. The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd enlarged edition (London: Taylor and Francis, 1992), 174.

[26] Basilides (85–145) is one of the earliest Gnostics, and accounts about him seem to be quite conflicting, in the sense that while Irenaeus presents his teaching as dualistic, Hippolytus proposes a rather monistic understanding of it. His religious system stems from the idea that nothing was there in the beginning. When Basilides says nothing he means nothing, so not even God existed in the beginning. Despite the fact that God is essentially nonexistent, Basilides claims that his nonexistent God produced a world-seed, which is the origin of every thing that exists. In the world-seed there were three principles which were cosubstantial with the nonexistent God. The first principle was light, so he returned to God; the second was heavier so he had to grow wings to ascend to God (this is the Holy Spirit according to Basilides, and his wings separate the upper worlds from the lower worlds); the third was the heaviest of all, so he needed purification to rise to God. This particular third principle who needs purification through good deeds is the spiritual substance of the souls who exist in the material world and are in need of purification and salvation. The world seed did not produce only these three principles, but also two archons or demiurges. The first archon or demiurge created the world of stars (Ogdoad), and the second created the world below stars (Hebdomad). The second archon or demiurge is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so he is the God of the Old Testament. The material world was penetrated by Gnosis (which in Valentinus is the Gospel, or the understanding of the spiritual world). The Gnosis came into the world as a ray of light and eventually entered Mary as the incarnated Jesus. The Gnosis can only be understood and accepted by the pneumatics, who will be taken to the spiritual world above in the realm of the third principle. This is possible due to the life and suffering of Jesus, which seems to be effective only for the pneumatics, because the rest of humanity is left by the non-existent God in a state of total ignorance. See also Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 126–128.

[27] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 546.

[28] See also Antigone Samellas, *Death in the Eastern Mediterranean, 50–600 A.D.* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2002), 62.

[29] See also John Davidson, *The Gospel of Jesus. In Search of his Original Teachings* (Bath: Clear Press, 1995, reprinted 2004), 427–428.

Basilides believed that the sins of our past life were atoned in this life,[30] Mani was convinced that this life may lead to a better future in the next life.[31] In both cases, however, the past life for Basilides and the next life for Mani have to do with stages of human existence in this world.

Baur does mention that, for Mani, Christianity was indeed the absolute religion. However, he considered Christianity as having claims to absoluteness as a religion only with the purpose of presenting his own Pagan religious system as having "a Christian color", as Baur vividly puts it. It is clear that both Christianity and Manichaeism advanced claims to being true religions, and it was perhaps because of this unique pretension that, in Mani, Christianity and Manichaeism had to be seen as one single religious system. In other words, this is why Mani mixed his Paganism with Christianity, hoping that both would be seen as a fundamental religious unity.[32] As far as Baur is concerned, Manichaeism blended Christianity with Paganism much the same way pseudo-clementine thought mixed Christianity with Judaism.[33] Baur also notices that, in case of an identification between Christianity and Judaism, the nature of Christianity would be affected but, at the same time, its connection with Paganism would be reduced. For Baur though, Christianity was in connection to both Judaism and Paganism, but the very form of religion which managed to combine Christianity with Judaism on the one hand and Paganism on the other was Manichaeism, most likely because of its missionary drive.[34] This also reveals the purpose of the relationship between Manichaeism and Gnosticism. Thus, as far as Baur is concerned, Manichaeism and Gnosticism can be placed under the same general concept, which is the concept of Gnosis or the notion of religious philosophy.[35] This is crucially important for Baur, because he establishes that the very idea of Gnosis defines the core of religious philosophy.[36] In other words, religious philosophy defines itself by means of the concept of Gnosis.

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[30] See Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo. The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A.S. Worrall (London: Continuum, 1994, reprinted 2004), 82–83.

[31] This explains the radical asceticism promoted by Manichaeism. See Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting. The Evolution of a Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 167.

[32] For details about the mixture between Christianity and Paganism in Manichaeism, see Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 158.

[33] The relationship between Judaism and Christianity was of great concern for Baur. See Bruce Kaye, "From the Editor: Orthodox Anglicans and Catholicity", 125–133, in *Journal of Anglican Studies* 9.2 (2011): 127.

[34] See also Iain Gardner and Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35.

[35] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 546–547.

It appears that, in Baur, the idea of religious philosophy belongs to the concept of Christian Gnosis, so the two notions cannot be separated in any way. Religious philosophy, and especially the new philosophy of religion which is Baur's main concern, can be explained in a better way by means of the idea of Christian Gnosis.[37] The philosophy of religion and Gnosis go hand in hand, which also leads to the full appreciation of Christianity and of its value. Another crucially important consequence of the inner connection between religious philosophy and Gnosis has to do with the fact that the concept of Christian Gnosis can be used without reference to Manichaeism. For Baur, therefore, Gnosticism and Manichaeism seem to be two different religious movements, although both Gnosticism and Manichaeism find themselves in a clear relationship.[38] There was a transfer of concepts between the two religions, especially from Christianity to Manichaeism, so the relationship between them can be defined as persistent, as Baur points out, because Manichaeism placed itself next to Christianity and to Christian Gnosis.[39] It is clear hence that, despite the undeniable relationship between Manichaeism and Gnosticism, there is a good reason—Baur believes—to differentiate between Manichaeism and Gnosticism.[40] This is why, for Baur, Manichaeism must be seen as a different and individualized religious development, which is not only separate but also distinct from Gnosticism. In other words, the difference between Manichaeism and Gnosticism is not only an issue of historical development, in the sense that, from the standpoint of time, Manichaeism is a later religious phenomenon; there are intrinsic, dogmatic issues which speak of a fundamental difference between the teachings of Manichaeism and the beliefs of Gnosticism.

Given that Manichaeism intended to replace Christian doctrines with Pagan values, Baur explains that it was quite natural for the church to come forward with a very prompt reaction. As such, he notices that the Church

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[36] See also Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume 1: Prolegomena, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, IL: Baker Academic, 2007), 122–123.

[37] Also check Johannes Kuhn, "The False Choice between Faith and Rational Understanding", 45–69, in Grant Kaplan (ed.), *Faithfully Seeking Understanding. Selected Writings of Johannes Kuhn* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 62.

[38] For further details, see Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, trans. Allan Arkush (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 94–95.

[39] Early Christian theologians, such as Clement and Origen, used the idea of Gnosis in order to address the issues raised by Gnostic beliefs. See Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 54–55.

[40] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 547.

Fathers entered a staunch polemic against Manichaeism, which was perceived as a huge and pervasive enemy which needed a prompt response if orthodoxy was to be defended at all.[41] This is why the Church Fathers launched a fierce war against the Paganism of Manichaeism and their only task in this theological enterprise was to counter Paganism.[42] Manichaeism was not just any sort of Paganism, so the Church Fathers had to oppose it based on the principle of Christian monotheism. They eventually chose to do so because the Paganism of Mani's teachings was brand new form of dualism, so church orthodoxy had to rescue the foremost of Christian doctrines, which is the uniqueness and unity of God. At the same time, the Fathers of the church were forced to save the honor and dignity of the Old Testament against the bitter reproaches proliferated by Manichaeism.[43] The reaction of the church against Manichaeism did not entail anything essentially new, but Christian polemics—Baur argues—was not in the position to overcome the opposing views of Manichaeism. It seems that Manichaeism continued to find new friends and adherents, who promoted its view within and outside the church. At the same time, Manichaeism found a way to recommend its religious awareness in the very midsts of the Christian church.[44]

Baur is aware that the influence of Gnosticism and Manichaeism was not restricted to the church of antiquity. It is clear for him that both Gnostic and Manichaeic sects managed to propagate their teachings well into the Middle Ages.[45] What is important to realize, however, has to do with the content of their teachings which, although pulled beyond antiquity, can be encountered in a slightly modified form.[46] This is an indication that the influence of Manichaeism and Gnosticism remained fairly constant because their teachings were not altered consistently. It does not mean that the influence of Manichaeism and Gnosticism was extremely powerful; Baur only wants to make it clear that both sects did continue their existence into the Middle Ages despite the severe wars which were waged against them and the resources which were invested in these battles. The reality of Gnosis, regardless of whether it was Manichaeistic or not, was part of the dogmatic and church history of the Middle Ages because, as Baur points out, the Gnosis of the first century managed to produce an initial impact which was deemed to last well beyond apostolic times.[47] Baur is eager to show that both Manichaeism and Gnosticism, which are the result of first century Gnosis, continued their existence in the Middle Ages because the influence of Gnosis itself could not just simply vanish.[48] As far as he is concerned, the Gnosis managed to produce a certain religious and speculative awareness, and it was this awareness that proved influential enough not to succumb to all the wars it was subjected to in antiquity or the Middle Ages.[49]

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[41] See also Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology. Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 264–265.

[42] Augustine is famously known for his criticism of Manichaeism. For a study which doubts the veracity of Augustine's knowledge of Manichaeism, see John K. Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 316ff.

[43] For details about how Augustine used the Old Testament to counter Manichaeistic teachings, see Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 120–122.

[44] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 546–547.

[45] See also Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000–1200*, trans. Denise A. Kaiser (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 107.

[46] Manichaeist teachings resurfaced in medieval Europe in the doctrines of Bogomils (Bulgaria), Cathars (France), Paulicians (Armenia), Patarenes (Bosnia) and other religious groups which saw themselves as Christian. See Jennifer M. Corry, *Perceptions of Magic in Medieval Spanish Literature* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemount Publishing, 2005), 224,

Gnosis and Augustinianism

When Baur mentions the name of Augustine, the first thing which is attached to his personality seems to be the fact that he indisputably occupies the leading position among the Christian theologians who opposed Manichaeism.[50] As is clear by now, Manichaeism is essentially a dualistic religion, and Baur points out that Christian theology began to counter dualism from its earliest historical stages; Augustine, however, continued this tradition of theological fighting against dualism—in his case, concerning Manichaeism—with great perspicacity and multifaceted skills, but also to a greater extent than his

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and Jeffrey B. Russel, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1965), 191–192.

[47] See Ivan Satyavrata, *The Holy Spirit. Lord and Life-Giver* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 31.

[48] See also Sylvia Francke, *Tree of Life and the Holy Grail. Ancient and Modern Spiritual Paths and the Mystery of Rennes-le-Château* (Forest Row: Temple Lodge Publishing, 1996, reprinted 2007), 12.

[49] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 547–548.

[50] It is important to see here that, in Augustine's view, Gnosticism developed into what later became known as Manichaeism. The opposition between spirit and matters seems to have been overemphasized in Manichaeism, because the initial Gnostic opposition—in the sense of dichotomy—between good and evil appears to have developed into a war between the two principles in Manichaeism. See, for details, Craig R. Smith, *The Quest for Charisma. Christianity and Persuasion* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 110.

predecessors.[51] This is why, and Baur does not refrain from showing this aspect in a very clear way, Augustine deserves to be mentioned among all the Christian theologians who sternly criticized dualism as the initiator of a whole theological system.[52] At the same time, however, Augustine is not only the founder of a system which, one way or another, fought the tenets of dualistic religions, but also the creator of a set of doctrines which had a significant influence over the whole of Western dogmatics.[53] Baur notices that, from the very start of its history, the Christian church and its theologians engaged in a relationship with Paganism.[54] As far as Baur is concerned, this particular relationship is between Pagan religion, on the one hand, and the religion of the Old and New Testaments, on the other. Regarding Augustin, it is in his writings—Baur contends—that this relationship find what Baur calls "its positive foundation".[55]

Baur explains that Augustine's theological system is closely connected with the concept of original sin.[56] Thus, original sin seems to be the very essence of humanity since it managed to darken man's religious knowledge. This is essential to establish because, as Baur points out, in Augustine the malignant influence of original sin over mankind in general not only refers to the darkening of religious knowledge, but also to the robbing of man's free will of all its moral power.[57] The very essence of the church's doctrine of original sin—of which Augustine is a most distinguished representative, at least in Baur's mind—the Pagan world is to be considered as belonging to the sphere of false religion. This is to say that the false religion of the Pagan world is the kingdom of darkness as well as the exponent of the ravages of original sin.[58] The Pagan world with its darkened and false religion is contrasted by Augustine with the enlightened revelation of God. This is the realm of God's illuminated grace, which is presented to humanity by means of the religion of the Old and New Testaments. There is, therefore, a sharp contrast between the Pagan religion and God's religion in Augustine.[59] What explains the difference between the two kinds of religion is the Christian doctrine of original sin, which Augustine expounded with great success in his writings. Thus, in Augustine, Paganism means falsity, darkness, and sin, while God's religion is truth, light, and grace.[60] It is important to notice that, in Augustine, the God's true religion is described as revelation, which comes to humanity despite man's original sin through the Old and New Testaments.[61]

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[51] See G. Stroumsa and P. Fredriksen, "The Two Souls and the Divided Will", 198–217, in Albert I. Baumgarten, with Jan Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Self, Soul, and Body in Religious Experience* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 199–200.

[52] Further details about Augustine's criticism of Manichaeistic dualism, see Jason D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma. Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 CE* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 75.

[53] For more information about a position which criticizes Augustin for being intentionally too simplistic in dealing with Manichaeistic dualism, see Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue. Christian and Pagan Cultures, c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 53.

[54] See also Edward Peters (ed.), *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 32.

[55] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 548.

[56] See Alister E. McGrath, *Justitia Dei. A History of the Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, reprinted 2005), 369–370.

[57] See also Luigi Luzzatti, *God in Freedom. Studies in the Relations between Church and State* (New York, NY: Cosimo, 2005), 218.

Baur notices therefore that Augustine countered the Gnostics in a particular way which was strongly connected with ethics.[62] This is why he shows that it was through Augustine that the previous insight was firmly established in opposition with Gnostic teachings. According to Augustine's system, what the Gnostics attempted to derive, based on a principle which was prone to man's will, can be understood only in a certain ethical way. The next step for Baur is to explain clearly what Augustine opposed about Gnostic tenets. Consequently, he points out that Augustine criticizes the idea that the mind/spirit must work step by step to attain a full awareness of its own. At the same time, he also opposed the Gnostic conviction that absolute knowledge can be mediated through certain antitheses or antagonisms.[63] These two fundamental doctrines prove, as far as the Gnostics were concerned, that they favored a higher natural law. Augustine also understood that Gnostic natural law was opposed to the doctrines of the Old and New Testaments and, at the same time, it was grounded on a conditional development process. This explains why—in Baur's understanding—the Church Fathers strongly countered the Gnostic insight of the conditionality of individuals through general natural connections.

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[58] For details about Augustine's criticism against Manichaeans and how he emphasized the consequences of sin over man's will, see Jeffrey B. Russell, *The Prince of Darkness. Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988, reprinted 1992), 99–100.

[59] More information about Augustine's attack of Pagan religion can be found in David J. Bobb, "The Humility of True Religion: Augustine's Critique of Roman Civil Religion", 66–92, in Ronald Weed and John von Heyking (eds.), *Civil Religion in Political Thought. Its Perennial Questions and Enduring Relevance in North America* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 71–72.

[60] For an excellent discussion about sin in Pagan religions, see Gillian R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, reprinted 1994), 100–101.

[61] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 548.

[62] This has to do with Augustine's belief that natural evil is deeply inherent in the very substance of nature. See Michael S. Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, reprinted 1999, 2001), 217.

[63] An illuminating discussion about Gnostic antitheses, especially as reflected in Manichaeism, can be found in Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy. Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987, reprinted 1989), 390–392.

In other words, building on the revelation of the Old and New Testaments which discloses that human will was darkened by original sin, the Church Fathers could not accept the Gnostic doctrine that men and women can have fully meaningful lives based exclusively on natural relationships. As a result—and Augustine not only stays in this line but also establishes it as a theological system—they also opposed the idea of a moral freedom of man's will.[64] This is to say that Augustine and the Church Fathers share a general consensus in rejecting the Gnostic conviction that man's will enjoys moral freedom.[65] According to Augustine, both morality and freedom were deeply affected by original sin, so they can no longer function as characteristics of man's will.

Baur notices that, in this particular respect, the Augustinian system knots together all its doctrines based on the reality of the sin of the first human beings, on other words, the original sin of humanity is the very element which connects Augustine's doctrines one to another.[66] There is, however, an important distinction to be noticed here, namely the fact that original sin is fundamentally important for the whole of Augustine's system provided that it is the result of man's free will. This is why Baur points out quite emphatically that it is only in original sin, which—again—is the product of man's freedom of personal decision, that the whole of man's life can be utterly split in two essential realities. When it comes to identify these two realities which characterize the split in man's life, Baur indicates that, according to Augustine, man's sin severed his existence in such a way that the human person now lives between bondage and freedom.[67]

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[64] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 548–549.

[65] See also Roger Horrocks, *An Introduction to the Study of Sexuality* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 10.

[66] For a view which promotes the resemblance between Augustine's doctrine of original sin and that of Gnostics, see Philip J. Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 51.

[67] There is a fundamental lack of harmony which affects the human being as a result of sin. For details, see Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin. Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 80–81.

This means that man's sin places human life in the very opposition between sin and grace, but also between falsity and truth.[68] It is vital to highlight at this point that, as far as Baur is concerned, this particular division of man's life because of sin is solely connected with sin itself, which means that it has no grounds for what he calls a "higher order of things". Baur also notices that the stronger the insight and doctrine of the following period grew as a result of Augustine's influence, the weaker the influence of the early teaching of Gnosticism became in the whole period of the Middle Ages. What came to be established, however, is the conviction shared by the early Church Fathers about the relationship between Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, which in Augustine became even more "fixed", to use Baur's rendering, and eventually remained dominant.[69]

Gnosis and the Middle Ages

When it comes to the Middle Ages, as Baur promptly notices from the very beginning of his discourse about this specific period of church history, the most important aspect which needs to be discussed in connection with dogma is scholasticism. Thus, according to Baur, the most salient characteristic of scholasticism appears to be the fact that it gave the "spirit of speculation" a new and vital boost.[70] Baur explains that scholasticism was pervaded with an acute awareness of the task of dealing with dogmas, and especially with that of balancing faith and knowledge—or one should rather say faith and reason.[71] There is, however, one major problem which, as Baur points out, scholasticism did not manage to avoid, namely the treatment of historical significance. Scholasticism was therefore so preoccupied with dogmas that it lost sight of history and what that means for doctrines.[72]

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[68] See also Donato Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen. The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 242–243, and Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 425–426.

[69] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 549.

[70] For details about the importance of Scholasticism for medieval theology, see Elizabeth Lowe, *The Contested Authority of Thomas Aquinas. The Controversies between Hervaeus Natalis and Durandus of St. Pourçain* (London: Routledge, 2003), 37ff.

[71] Baur's insight is confirmed by contemporary theology. See, for instance, Susan K. Wood, *Spiritual Exegesis and the Church in the Theology of Henri de Lubac* (Grand Rapids, MI/Edinburgh: Eerdmans/T&T Clark, 1998), 9.

[72] For a similar view in contemporary thought, see Bernard Williams, *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 205.

As Baur shows next, this led to scholasticism's failure to place religious history and dogmatic speculation in a vivid, active connection. The Middle Age lasted for a considerable number of centuries and, as time elapsed, Baur notices that the tendency of medieval theology was to distance itself from the time when Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity were considered inseparable.[73] This is a clear reference to antiquity and the early church, when Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity were believed to exist in an unmediated relationship, which produced a stimulating impact on the deepest religious and speculative interest.

Then, Baur explains that the more the Middle Ages moved away from the early church and its preoccupation with the vital connection between Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, the deeper medieval theologians followed the concern for the dogma which was given through the tradition of the church. This is why medieval theologians were supremely interested in the proliferation of church doctrine and tradition; in other words, they studied the content of dogma and tradition with utmost attention, in part and in detail, as Baur keenly underlines, without posing any danger to doctrines altogether by asking uncomfortable questions that could have destroyed the foundation of their traditionalistic approach to faith. It is important to notice here that, for medieval theologians, the church's dogma had to be investigated through dialectic reflection coupled with religious awareness.[74]

The Middle Ages were quite a peculiar period of church history mainly because the theologians who lived through them had an obvious proneness for doctrine. At the same time, it seems to be equally evident that Baur himself has a certain bias in dismissing the Middle Ages much too soon, because the time he spends in detailing its characteristics is indeed much shorter than that dedicated to either Manichaeism or Augustinianism. Baur correctly notices the medieval interest in doctrine, but other than the Middle Ages' acute preoccupation with doctrine he does not insist on the various schools of thought which resulted from such an interest.[75] What he does write down, however, is that the Middle Ages sought to provide Christianity with what he calls "the stability of dogma", so he insists that, during the Middle Ages, everything had to do with the stability of dogma.[76]

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[73] Medieval theology is not concerned with the interpretation of history. See, for details, José Comblin, "The Theme of Reconciliation in Theology in Latin America", 135–170, in Iain S. MacLean, *Reconciliation, Nations, and Churches in Latin America* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 146.

[74] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 549–550.

[75] More details about medieval schools of thought in Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools. From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), and Steven P. Marrone, "Certitude or Knowledge of God? Thirteenth-Century Augustinians and the Doctrine of Divine Illumination", 145–160, in Ghita Holmström-Hintikka (ed.), *Medieval Philosophy and Modern Times* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000).

The theologians of the Middle Ages were so concerned with doctrines that what they really wanted to achieve was the quintessence of Christian dogmas. There seems to have been no interest in studying the religious life of people in their historical context; no reflection on such a possible direction of research appears to have characterized medieval spirituality.[77] The horizon of medieval thought excluded historical preoccupations in order to favor the development of doctrine. As far as Baur is concerned, such an interest in dogmas was nothing but a "shrunk circle" of the Middle Ages' dialectical perspective to which medieval theologians appear to have clung a little bit too much.[78] Sadly though Baur does not seem to appreciate the Middle Ages for their dogmatic diversity as there is no reference to the various medieval schools of thought which emerged through their historical development. Likewise, nothing is said about medieval theological debates concerning various doctrines—such as predestination or the church—which pervaded the period with more than just a sense of stability.[79]

Last but not the least, Baur makes no mention of the Middle Ages' preoccupation with philosophy—and especially with the so-called christianization of Aristotle's thought—which permeated medieval theology to a much higher degree that Baur seems to allow.[80]

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[76] See Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology. A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 153.

[77] Baur is overtly simplistic in his approach about the Middle Ages' exclusivistic interest in doctrine. Medieval intellectuals were widely concerned with arts and technology. See Walter Rüeg, "Chapter 1: Themes", 3–34, in Walter Rüeg (gen. ed.), *A History of the University in Europe*, Volume 1: Universities in the Middle Ages, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 25–26.

[78] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 550.

[79] The doctrine of predestination, for instance, was instrumental for the development of medieval theological terminology, which also influenced the understanding of the church. See Margaret R. Miles, *The Word Made Flesh. A History of Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 138.

[80] For details about the importance of Aristotelianism for medieval thought, see Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages. Their Religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University 1996), 163–164.

Gnosis and the Reformation

Baur points out that, following the Middle Ages, the Reformation came up with a significant breakthrough. What the Reformation managed to produce was, according to Baur, a great contrast or a separation of the medieval religious insight and mindset, which until the Reformation, went in one and the same direction. As noted previously, medieval theology was—at least in Baur's understanding—solely oriented towards doctrine and its main preoccupation was dogmatic stability; when the Reformation, however, emerged into an independent religious movement, this specific medieval focus on doctrinal stability was split into two opposing systems. Therefore, the new theological orientation promoted by the Reformation was no longer singularly pushed towards dogmatic stability as in the Middle Ages, but rather into a brand new direction which had a double focus. With the Reformation came the perspective which investigated the relationship between Christianity and other religions. Baur is convinced that protestant theology favored the investigation of what happened between Christianity and the religious phenomena which preceded it. Baur explains that this particular relationship did not remain without influence during the Reformation, and this seems to be an excellent achievement—as far as Baur is concerned—because theology is no longer exclusively occupied with doctrine, but also with history.[81]

To be more exact, Baur shows that once the relationship between Christianity and the religions which preceded it comes under serious investigation, the medieval preoccupation with the stability of dogma is given up. Setting aside dogmatic stability as methodology for theological research presupposes the acceptance of a historical movement in the realm of Christian doctrines, so for Baur it is paramount to have dogmas coupled with history. The particularity of having doctrines and history placed together in theological methodology results in connecting Christianity with a whole set of religions which came into being long before its historical beginnings. This presupposes that a new perspective on what Baur calls "the higher historical understanding" of great religious movements must be awoken. This also leads to the investigation of the content of the history of religions, so what the Reformation achieved, in Baur's perception, was not only to study Christianity in connection with the religions which preceded it, but also to place Christianity among the rest of the world's religions.[82] In other words, the Reformation produced and promoted a historical investigation of the doctrines of Christianity, which resulted in seeing Christianity not only as a world religion, but also as a religion among other religions.[83]

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[81] Preoccupation with history is the essence of Baur's approach to religion. See also Dennis L. Stamps, "Pauline Letters", 265–270, in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2007), 267.

There is a remarkable proof that protestantism not only concentrated on dogma, but also on the historical character of religion in the sense that it saw Christianity both as a religion and as a religion amongst other religions. As far as Baur is concerned, this evidence lies in the fact that protestants placed an enormous emphasis on the difference between the law and the gospel.[84] Baur shows that from the very beginning, protestantism was strongly opposed to what he calls "external working actions"; in other words, protestant theologians were expressly against man's works.[85] This is, of course, a direct consequence of the fact that catholics considered man's works as having a significant degree of moral merits, which meant that the virtue of salvation itself lay in man's meritorious works.

At the same time, this is also an indication of the fact that the marrow and the depth of religious awareness was based on merit, while in protestantism the idea of merit was powerfully opposed as the core of religion. Therefore, the more catholicism favored merit and man's actions as a foundation for religion, the more protestantism was forced to place its main theological orientation on a totally different aspect[86]—this is why, for protestants, the very essence of Christianity lies in the awareness that the principle of salvation is anchored in something fundamentally different to the law.[87] It is quite clear that, if the law and its subsequent merits which are essentially attributed to man's actions for his salvation must be replaced with something else, then this new religious and theological aspect must find itself in sheer opposition to the law and its meritorious actions. For protestants, the notion which defied law and the idea of merit was the gospel, for which both the law and the concept of merit as attached to man's works, were irrelevant.

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[82] Compare William Baird, *History of New Testament Research. From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann*, Volume 2 (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 219.

[83] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 550.

[84] For the importance of the law as opposed to the Gospel in Protestant theology, see John Witte, Jr., *Law and Protestantism. The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 87.

[85] See also Maria Salenius, "True Purification: Donne's Art of Rhetoric in Two Candlemas Sermons", 314–334, in Mary Arshagouni Papazian (ed.), *John Donne and the Protestant Reformation. New Perspectives* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 320.

[86] More about the connection between Catholicism and Protestantism in Baur can be read in Klaus Penzel, "A Chapter in the History of the Ecumenical Quest: Schelling and Schleiermacher", 322–337, in *Church History. Studies in Christianity and Culture* 33.3 (1964): 323.

[87] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 550–551.

Protestantism promotes a rigorous differentiation between the law and the gospel, Baur notices, but it should equally be stressed that this separation of law and gospel is not only the purpose of the Reformation—as far as Baur is concerned, the opposition between the law and the gospel represents the most fundamental character of protestantism itself. In other words, there is no Protestant theology without this specific separation between the law on the one hand, and the gospel on the other.[88] Baur also sees that the law and the gospel somehow explain themselves in a mutual way. This is to say that the more the distinction between the law and the gospel was encouraged and stirred at the beginning of the Reformation, the more the value of the gospel appeared as being totally opposed to the law.[89] Baur points out that the very awareness of the absolute value of the gospel expressed itself as a certain disdain and contempt for the law, provided that the Reformation clung to this particular tenet from the start. Baur also insists on the fact that, once this differentiation was established, understood, and accepted as such, then a series of consequences resulted and Protestant theology had to accept all of them. The main issue here is that, in Baur's vision, the distinction between the law and the gospel in the Reformation of the sixteenth century resulted in and represents a phenomenon, which has a parallel only in the history of Gnosis in the first century.[90] At the end of the day, the Protestant separation between the law and the gospel is indeed a downplay of the law or, to be more precise, it is evident opposition to the law. In other words, and Baur is right in drawing this conclusion, the differentiation between the law and the gospel can be seen as an antinomian attitude which was common to the sixteenth century Reformation and the first century Gnosis.[91]

When it comes to antinomian attitudes, which exclude the law from having any value whatsoever for the purposes of one's salvation, Baur mentions the name of Johannes Agricola,[92] whom he compares with the Gnostics.

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[88] Compare C. Scott Dixon, *Protestants. A History from Wittenberg to Pennsylvania, 1517–1740* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 2.

[89] See also Jeong Koo Jeon, *Covenant Theology. John Murray's and Meredith G. Kline's Response to the Historical Development of Federal Theology in Reformed Thought* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), 189.

[90] Compare Tod Linafelt, *A Shadow of Glory. Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 2002), 21.

[91] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 551.

[92] Johannes Agricola (1494–1566) was one of Lutheranism's greatest characters. Born Johannes Schneider, Agricola rapidly became one of Luther's co-workers and friends, even as early as 1519, when they both went to the Leipzig debate. Later on he travelled to

To be more precise he writes that the antinomianism of Agricola and his followers is at least as famous as the anti-law manifestations of Marcion and his adherents.[93] Baur points out that antinomianism belittles the law in favor of the gospel and, in doing so, faith is placed above works in an absolute way. There is no possibility even of comparing the two, because it is simply that the law cannot be placed next to the gospel, and neither can works as compared to faith. This conviction was shared not only by Protestant antinomians in the sixteenth century, but also by most Gnostics.

As far as the Gnostics are concerned, Baur shows that they ascribed the entire power of salvation not to works, but to "their Gnosis". Returning to Protestant antinomianism, Baur explains that it was based on a whole series of convictions which stemmed from the idea that the law cannot produce anything in those who believe and are born again. This is why the law cannot even be considered part of the Word of God. In fact, all the things which belong to Moses "must go to the devil" and if christians cling to works in any way whatsoever they also are the devil's. Likewise, the best achievements of christians have nothing to do with the law, and Moses did not know anything about our faith and our religion.

The law, together with the new obedience—probably a reference to mainline Lutheranism in Agricola—does not belong to Christ's kingdom, but to the world, very much like Moses and the authority of the pope. For Baur, the proliferation of such an attitude which places the law and the gospel, as well as works and faith, in sheer opposition has every chance of establishing a genuine dualistic system.[94] Agricola may have lived in the sixteenth century but that was the case in the first as well, when Gnostics shared the common tendency to ascribe opposing convictions to equally opposing principles with the purpose of putting together an integrative perspective.[95] This explains why, at

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Frankfurt and Eisleben to strengthen the Protestant teaching there, and it was not until 1536 that he returned to Wittenberg. Once he began to hold that Christians have nothing to do with the law of Moses, which was applicable only to non-Christians and Jews, he was quickly dismissed as antinomian and he consequently had to flee the city. He then continued his prolific activity in Berlin, until the time of his death. See also Michael Mullett, *Historical Dictionary of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press/Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 5ff.

[93] See also Simon P. Heringa, *Ferdinand Christian Baur. Volledig en kritiesch overzicht van zijn werkzaamheid op theologiesch gebied* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 1869), 554.

[94] For more details about the opposition between law and Gospel in Baur, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars. Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1999), 21ff.

[95] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 551–552.

least for Baur, the dualism of the Gnostic system—so broadly disseminated in the first century—appears to have been so close to Agricola's sixteenth century antinomian doctrines.

Baur realizes that, if presented in these terms, namely as opposed to the gospel, the law had absolutely no chance of being considered divine or even godly. The actual meaning of the law acquired a negative connotation which was to be perpetuated in Protestant circles.[96] Thus, the religious value of the law suffered serious setbacks because of the antinomian debate within the Protestant churches of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, according to Baur, Protestant leaders were extremely eager to put an end to the debate concerning the relationship between the law and the gospel, but they were particularly interested in putting off the stir caused by antinomianism. This is why, Baur points out, they proceeded with care and resolution, so the antinomian debate was eventually brought to an end.

At the same time, this explains the reason for the disbanding or the cancellation of what Baur calls "the old link" which considered that the continuous identity between the law and the gospel was still possible. The identity between the law and the gospel presupposes the connection between the Old and the New Testament, but the efforts to preserve the link between the two failed within Protestant circles especially with regard to concepts like gospel and salvation which are contained within it.[97] In other words, Protestants had a problem with the very idea of salvation, so they had to decide whether the reality of salvation includes the law or not—in other words, whether salvation is based on the law or not. It is clear for Baur that the leaders of the Protestant church decided not to include the law and its good deeds in the content of salvation—namely in the prerequisites of salvation—which led to the total separation and opposition between the law and the gospel in Protestant theology.[98]

At this point, Baur turns to a major critique issued by Catholic polemicists during the time of the Reformation, which reportedly places Protestantism in close connection with Gnosticism. Baur explains that religious manifestations within Protestantism, such as antinomianism,[99] gave Catholic theologians the opportunity to criticize other Protestant doctrines, among which the most prominent are the doctrine of original sin, then man's total inability to perform spiritual good, and even what Baur calls "the related doctrine" of the efficiency of God's grace. At the same time, coupled with antinomianism, or rather because of some manifestations of Protestant antinomianism, these doctrines enabled some Catholic polemicists to come up with the affirmation that there is no religious manifestation which the theological system of the Reformers bears more resemblances than Gnosticism.[100]

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[96] For a critique of Baur's conviction that the law acquired a negative connotation in Protestant theology, see Heikki Räisänen, *Challenges to Biblical Interpretation. Collected Essays, 1991–2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 86–87.

[97] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 552.

[98] For details about the complex relationship between law and Gospel in Protestant theology, see J.S. Whale, *The Protestant Tradition. An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955, reprinted 2011), 37ff, and Jaroslav J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Volume 4: Reformation of Church and Dogma, 1300–1700 (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1984), 243.

As a matter of fact, and Baur points this out clearly, Catholic polemics during the time of the Reformation even suggested that Protestantism is—in its innermost and essential character—a renovation and renewal of the old Gnosis. Baur also clarifies the fact that he had already dealt with this issue by showing how the affirmation of Catholic polemicists can be either supported or rejected, but the point is that Baur does in fact allow for the idea of Gnosis to come in very close proximity to the reality of Protestant doctrines.[101] At the same time, if Agricola's antinomianism is seen as a Protestant theological development—and this is exactly how Protestant antinomianism can be perceived from a religious and historical standpoint which investigates the Reformation as a religious phenomenon in history despite the fact that the leaders of the Protestant camp strongly rejected it—then the resemblance between sixteenth-century Protestantism, which includes Agricola's antinomianism, and first century's Gnosticism cannot straightforwardly be rejected without even being considered as a theoretical possibility.

Baur, however—whose interest in and proneness for Gnosis is more than evident—insists that the Catholic comparison between Protestantism and Gnosticism should not be a problem for protestants.[102] This is why he points out that what is important indeed resides with the correct understanding of the concept of Christian Gnosis on the one hand, as well as its purely ethical character on the other. Therefore, once the true meaning of Gnosis and its moral essence are properly apprehended, then there is no reason for Protestants to feel ashamed because of the comparison made by Catholics between their theological system and Gnosticism. As for Baur, he does seem convinced that there is at least an element which allows for a comparison between Protestantism and Gnosticism and this is because there is one aspect which the two religions appear to have in common. He explains that the awareness of evil is the very aspect which Protestantism and Gnosticism may be said to share, but this is of course—for Baur at least—no reason to feel embarrassed as a Protestant when compared with a Gnostic. Baur insists that without this particular awareness of evil, both Protestantism and Gnosticism must fear the fabricated accusation of a Christian extreme or even of a hyper Christianity.

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[99] For more details about Protestant antinomianism, see David Como, "Antinomianism", 305–307, in Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster (eds.), *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America. A Comprehensive Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

[100] See Patricia Plovanich, "Antinomianism", 63–64, in Orlando O. Espín and James B. Nickoloff (eds.), *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 64.

[101] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 552–553.

[102] Compare D. Stephen Long, *Hebrews*, Belief: A Theological Commentary of the Bible Series (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 91.

As far as Baur is concerned, this parallel between Protestantism and Gnosticism can indeed be expanded the very same way it was itself expanded by their own promotors. Thus, protestants should never fear the comparison with Gnosticism because the awareness of evil is the proof that they also have a deep awareness of sin.[103] Baur underlines that Protestantism is willing to descend into the very depth of the awareness of sin in order to show the importance of its awareness of salvation, because such an awareness has evident ethical consequences.[104] To be more precise, according to Baur, protestants are willing to insist on their doctrine of sin in order to win the true mediation for their awareness of salvation in their faith. In other words, if protestants really want to explain themselves, then they have to search deep into the doctrine of sin, which will help them show how crucial the doctrine of salvation really is for their faith.[105]

Gnosis between Absolute Truth, Salvation, and Faith

It is crucially important to understand here that, for Baur, Protestantism has two main characteristics, which define it as a religious movement: first, there is the ambition to be aware of the absolute truth,[106] and second, there is its consciousness about the mediation between salvation and faith.[107] While these two fundamental characteristics define the very essence of Protestantism in Baur's understanding, it is equally important to see that he also ascribes these very two features to Gnosticism. This is to say that it is not only Protestantism which is preoccupied with the quest for absolute truth and the pursuit of the relationship between salvation and faith; Gnosticism as well is a religious movement which seeks to investigate the very same tenets. It is quite natural therefore to conclude—and Baur underlines this result with evident clarity—that the Protestantism of the sixteenth century stays in a closer relationship with Gnosticism than Catholicism. With respect to Catholicism, Baur does not mention much, but he does stress that it builds on what Baur calls "the unintermediateness" between the given aspects, namely salvation and faith. In other words, unlike Protestantism and hence Gnosticism, there is no interest in Catholicism to show the link between salvation and faith.

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[103] The Protestants most likely inherited their acute awareness of sin from Augustine's theology. See, for instance, M.E. Brinkman, *The Tragedy of Human Freedom. The Failure and Promise of the Christian Concept of Freedom in Western Culture* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 129–130.

[104] The link between the awareness of evil, sin, and salvation on the one hand, and ethics on the other, appears to look like Max Weber's thesis about Protestant ethics. See Sigurd Skirbekk, *Dysfunctional Culture. The Inadequacy of Cultural Liberalism as a Guide to Major Challenges of the 21st Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 32.

[105] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 553.

Consequently, for Baur, one can conclude that nor has Catholicism the intention of investigating the deepest aspects of the mediacy of truth. Having established that, Baur goes on to show that the mediation process between salvation and faith is supposed to subdue the life of the individual, so that the very existence of man depends on the relationship between salvation and faith. This standpoint—so critically important for both Protestantism and Gnosticism—lies at the basis of the development of the religious spirit in the history of religion.[108] Baur does not forget to underline that it is also in this particular respect that Protestantism comes closer by far to Gnosticism than Catholicism.[109] One obvious conclusion would be that Protestantism had a much greater contribution to the development of the religious spirit in the history of religion than Catholicism and, in doing so, the Protestantism of the sixteenth century continues the religious and intellectual tradition of first century Gnosticism.

For Baur, the relationship between Protestantism and Gnosticism, but also between Protestantism and Catholicism, is closely connected with the way both Protestantism and Catholicism understand the Old and the New

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[106] Compare George W. Forell, *The Protestant Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1975), 78.

[107] For a helpful discussion about the relationship between salvation and faith in Protestant theology, see George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth. The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 139–140.

[108] Compare Otto Pfeiderer, *The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant* (London: Routledge, 2002, first edition 1890), 285.

[109] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 553–554.

Testaments, and especially the link between the two.[110] It is clear that, as far as Protestantism is concerned, there is a clear separation between the Old and the New Testaments, which is caused by the opposition between the Law and the Gospel. This is an indication of the fact that, according to Protestantism, there is a religion of the Old Testament and a religion of the New Testament, the former being based on the law, while the latter builds on the gospel.[111] Catholicism, on the other hand, concentrated its efforts on seeing the gospel only as an alteration of the law or as a better form thereof. This is why, Baur points out, Catholicism perceives the doctrines of the Christian church as a continuation and a completion of the teachings of Jewish theocracy. It seems that Catholicism is willing to equalize everything, so that the connection between Judaism and Christianity goes almost unnoticed.[112]

Baur, however, notices that, in Catholicism, the world views of Judaism and Christianity are placed almost at the same level, while the non-mediation of the two world views becomes more evident. It is as if there were no differences between Judaism and Christianity in Catholicism, and so Catholicism extends a peace offer to Paganism. As far as Baur is concerned, Catholicism replaced Augustine's concept of original sin with Pelagianism and this movement seems to be evident as Catholicism acknowledges the existence of a natural light in the Pagan world. As Baur shows, there is a "*bonum naturae*" in Paganism according to Catholic theology, so the "old gap" between Paganism, on the one hand, and Judaism and Christianity, on the other, is factually filled up in Catholic thought.[113]

Baur makes it clear that the opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism is more than just merely obvious; one can easily see it by looking at the very essence of the two religious confessions.[114] For instance, while Catholicism promotes stability and stresses immediacy Protestantism favors movement and impartation. The ideas of stability and movement refer to the essence of their dogmatic systems, in the sense that Catholicism tends to be more doctrinally stable—which is very much in line with Baur's depiction of the Catholic theology of the Middle Ages—while Protestantism has a propensity for constantly reconsidering dogmas. Likewise, the concepts of immediacy and impartation point to specific approaches concerning the Old and the New Testaments; Catholics prefer to underline the connection between the two, while Protestants have no problem in separating them. Thus, stability and the insistence on immediacy constitute the essence of Catholicism, while the idea of movement and the struggle for impartation, but also for mediation, make up the core of Protestantism.

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[110] Since the Old Testament is specifically Jewish while the New Testament is shaped by non-Jewish (Hellenistic) thought, the emergence of Christianity in Baur is seen like a battle between Judaism and Hellenism, which resulted in various understandings about the relationship between law and Gospel. See also Gary J. Dorrien, *The Word as True Myth. Interpreting Modern Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 47.

[111] The tension between Judaism and Hellenism in Protestant Christianity is evident here. See Wayne A. Meeks, *Christ is the Question* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 52.

[112] For the importance of Judaism in Baur, see Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 112.

[113] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 554.

[114] For an interesting discussion about the opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism in Baur, see Karl Lehman, "Catholic Christianity", 23–45, in Hans Joas and Klaus Wiegandt

This explains, in Baur's view, the capacity of Protestantism to stress the existence of the reign of sin in all the aspects pertaining to Pagan religions.[115] Baur writes that Protestant theology catches sight of the absolute dominion of sin over every aspect of Paganism. This opposition between the view which sees the power of sin subduing the world and the perspective which allows for goodness to exist in the world—which is the antinomy between Protestantism and Catholicism—can be traced through the whole history of religion. According to Baur, Protestantism makes it possible for the absolute power of religion to be seen at work in the life of the individual. In other words, religion—as particularized in Protestantism—can breach the hindering barriers of the darkening of the human spirit as well as man's estrangement and alienation from God.[116]

For Protestant theology, all the problems of humanity originate in the sin of men and women; the doctrine of original sin in Protestantism is the insight which explains why the human spirit faces grave problems in the world. This is why Protestantism—and in Baur the concept refers primarily to the theology of Luther and Calvin—is strongly connected to the idea of sin and especially that of original sin.[117] What is crucially important at this point, however, lies in the realization that the Protestant understanding of sin is not strictly dependent on the issues of the human race or its individuals. Baur insists that in

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(eds.), *Secularization and the World Religions*, trans. Alex Skinner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 43.

[115] For more details about Baur's view of sin, see Timothy L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin. Redefining "Beyond the Pale"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, reprinted 2004), 6–7.

[116] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 554–555.

[117] Compare Richard Roberts, "Sin, Saga, and Gender: The Fall and Original Sin in Modern Theology", 244–260, in Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer (eds.), *A Walk in the Garden. Biblical, Iconographical, and Literary Images of Eden* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 247.

Protestant theology the perspective on sin has a double origin with respect to what causes the existence as well as the manifestation of sin. Therefore, sin is not only the accidental act of human capriciousness and subjectivity, but also a reality which is grounded in the "highest divine order".[118]

To be more precise, Protestant theology allows for the idea that, beyond man's individual problems, the reality of sin is connected with the divine order through which all the aspects of religious history and the human order have been predetermined. This explains why Protestant theology is so very concerned with the issue of sin, and tends to wrestle with the problem by detaching the Old Testament from the New Testament. While the Old Testament is primarily concerned with the law, which is said to offer salvation through man's deeds, the New Testament focuses the realization of man's salvation exclusively on the divine order. Consequently, as the roots of sin are somehow connected with divine order, it is not illogical, and nor is it inconsistent, to suppose—as Protestant theologians stressed constantly—that salvation from sin, which is characteristic of the New Testament in Baur's view, can be achieved by not pointing exclusively to humanity but also to God's order.[119]

At this point, the concept of worldview becomes very important for Baur, as well as for the way he attempts to define Protestantism and Gnosticism, on the one hand, and Catholicism, on the other. He does not make any reference to Catholicism *per se* here, but its characteristics should be evident following the presentation of the worldview which is promoted by Protestantism and Gnosticism and has, in Baur's view, a powerful human-oriented component.[120] Thus, he highlights the fact that the essential distinction which is presented by the religious perspective of Gnosticism and Protestantism must be acknowledged as residing in a crucial opposition, on which Protestantism itself dwells. Otherwise stated, Baur shows that the essential character of Protestantism, as well as of the fundamental opposition which it inherently contains within itself, has to do with an ethical understanding of the world.[121]

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[118] An interesting discussion about the relationship between sin and the divine order in Protestantism can be found in Wolfgang Schluchter, *Rationalism, Religion, and Domination. A Weberian Perspective*, trans. Neil Solomon (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 273.

[119] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 555.

[120] Compare Graham J. McAleer, "Max Scheler: The Eternal in Man", 249–264, in Irving L. Horowitz (ed.), *Culture and Civilization*, Volume 2: Beyond Positivism and Historicism (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 256.

[121] See J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of Protestantism* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2005), 76.

Therefore, according to Baur, the Protestant worldview is cardinally ethical and, when expressed as opposition, it is the ethical antinomy between three distinct sets of notions, such as: election and condemnation, grace and sin, spirit and flesh. Baur points out that the opposition within the very essence of Protestantism must be recognized based on the contrast between these three conceptual pairs. It should be noticed here that Baur postulates the ethical or moral essence of Protestantism based on concepts which, in Patristic and Medieval times, would have had a double connotation, in the sense that they would imply the real, as well as the ontological existence of divine and human categories. Nevertheless, Baur is neither an exponent of Patristic nor of Medieval theologies; his understanding of the world, which he seems to impose on classical Protestantism, is fundamentally rational, so the opposition he sees in Protestant theology should be primarily ethical, not ontological. This is why he clearly dismisses any opposition between metaphysics and natural philosophy, between spirit and matter, between God and the world, between the absolute and finitude.[122]

This does not mean that one cannot talk about God any longer; on the contrary, the very essence of theology is the concept of God; it was from Böhme that Baur learned the lesson that the notion of God enlightens and gives meaning to the material world of created nature. The idea of God, however, should not be understood as ontological realism, but rather as ethics and morality. One can therefore conclude that, in Baur, since theology is essentially ethical, there is no distinction between metaphysics and natural philosophy, in the same way in which there is no difference between spirit and matter, a belief he adopted as a result of reading Hegel. This is why God and the world become one single ethical reality, which strengthens Baur's conviction that there is no factual distinction between absoluteness and finitude, between spirit and matter, and—quite obviously—between God and man.

Personal Conclusions

This book is an attempt to explain why Ferdinand Christian Baur ended up understanding Christian theology as a philosophy of religion which can be properly decrypted only through using the idea of Gnosis, an essential concept that is found in the works of Jakob Böhme and G.W.F. Hegel, as Baur himself points out in his written intellectual endeavors. Consequently, in the two parts of the book covering a total of five chapters, it has been shown how Baur was influenced by Böhme and Hegel in building his perspective on Christianity as a Gnostic, dualistic, and rational philosophy of religion that developed through the actual unfolding of human history. The first part (chapters 1, 2, and 3) focused on the things Baur learned from Böhme, especially issues like creation, the image of Lucifer, and the dualism of reality, while the second (chapter 4 and 5) investigated what Baur borrowed from Hegel, predominantly the relationship between spirit and matter as well as the connection between philosophy and religion. The concluding section was dedicated to Baur's synthesis of Böhme and Hegel which exemplified how Christian theology should be seen as a Gnostic philosophy of religion rooted in the material reality of man's history or, in other words, in nature.

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[122] Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis*, 555.

When it comes to nature—as seen in Chapter 1—Baur finds in Böhme that the idea of creation is essential for the understanding of God's being, not only because creation is the result of God's work, but also because it points again to the interpenetration of absoluteness and finitude, which also illustrates that reality of the hierarchy of being. God, angels, and humanity exists in a hierarchy which comes "down" from the spirituality of celestial beings (God and angels, although angels are themselves created) to the materiality of men and women. God and his creation are characterized by the dualism of light and darkness, which is accompanied by the reality of fragility—an interesting feature which defines not only creation but also God. When fragility is applied to God, Baur finds in Hegel a powerful ally because the traditional image of God in the old philosophy of religion (as a being which exists beyond the fragility of creation) is abandoned in favor of a God with human features, a God which ends up being a man. With fragility, however, comes the disclosure of evil, another reality which can be traced back not only to creation (man and angels) but also to God himself as the source of creation. While God is not seen as the very source of evil, he is nevertheless characterized by it since it is manifested in the materiality of creation both in angels (in fact, in fallen angels or devils) and man.

Thus, in Chapter 2, one can see that Baur dedicates a whole lot of effort to explain how evil impregnated creation in Böhme, and he does that by digging into Böhme's view of Lucifer. From being God's creation and closely associated with the idea of light, Lucifer turned against God and ended up spreading evil in the world. Baur notices that, in Böhme, Lucifer is defined by negative concepts such as rebellion, sin, death, and evil, which are all opposed to God's light, a dualism which characterizes the whole creation. This is why, in Baur's view of Böhme, Lucifer seems to be the very basis of dualism, the very notion which allows for religion to be read in dualistic terms.

Dualism was discussed at length in Chapter 3 as the main feature of religion seen as Gnosis. To be sure, dualism is the very foundation of Gnosis, which indicates that—according to Baur—Böhme's theology must be read in Gnostic terms since there are two distinctive conceptual pairs which make up his theology. Thus, the first duo of concepts which emerges from Baur's reading of Böhme is light and darkness. An overarching theme in both Baur and Böhme, the dualism of light and darkness highlights the fact that divinity is merely a characteristic of humanity, which confirms Baur's Hegelian perspective on religion that brings the spirit within the realm of nature. Second, there is the dualism of matter and spirit which builds on the idea of fragility to the point that both God and nature are affected by it. In other words, since God and man share the feature of fragility, it means that they both belong to the same reality, that of natural world. Then, one can easily see that the dualism of light and darkness as well as the dualism of matter and spirit are analyzed in connection with creation. For instance, the juxtaposition of Christ and Lucifer points to the contrast between good and evil—again, seen as realities which pertain to the same natural sphere of the world's material constitution. Then, there is the Word and the Son, a pair of concepts which are quite cryptical in Böhme since the Word appears to refer to God's capacity to create while the Son is the reality which produces man; what is important though has to do with the fact that both the Word and the Son share the fragility which characterizes the human being. Clearly, for Baur, Christian theology is not so much a theology *per se*, but rather a Gnostic or rational philosophy of religion meant to explain human nature, history, and reality.

In Chapter 4, one could see how Baur focused on Hegel's understanding of religion which is rooted in his perspective on the idea of God. Thus, as Baur points out, Hegel sees a permanent unity between the God and man, which helps him postulate the indestructible connection between spirit and matter. In Hegel, and Baur is fully aware of this, God can and should be seen as spirit, but only in connection to the human being. God, in other words, exists as spirit in the human being, which means that God is nothing but the spirit of the human being. The traditional understanding of God as non-corporeal is rejected by Hegel, whose idea of the total overlapping between spirituality or divinity and materiality or humanity is embraced by Baur in his efforts to explain that Christian theology is just a historical manifestation of a certain religion knowledge or Gnosis. The image of Jesus of Nazareth is the perfect example of how divinity is blended with humanity; Jesus is the man about whom one can say that he was God. Thus, based on Hegel's view of Jesus, Baur concludes that the actual history of Jesus of Nazareth is the natural manifestation of what used to be called God's spirit before Hegel. God's spirit is man's spirit, so God exists in the world as man is the lesson which Hegel taught Baur to the point that the letter made no distinction between philosophy and religion.

This is why in Chapter 5, Baur was presented as drawing heavily on Hegel's relationship between philosophy and religion which was only conceptual, not factual. One may speak about philosophy and religion, and Hegel does, but the two concepts only reveal that there is total identification between humanity and divinity. Philosophy is just another word for man, while religion is just another word for God, and since Hegel had proved that God was man and man was God so that there was no God but only man, Baur concludes that there is only philosophy and not religion or theology. Best case scenario, Baur is willing to accept that religion or theology (and specifically Christian theology) can be considered a particular manifestation of philosophy which should be investigated rationally; this is why, in his view, Christian theology is a Gnostic religious philosophy that unveils through the passing of time in history.

Thus, in the concluding section, it was illustrated how Baur provided us with a synthesis of Böhme and Hegel, which allowed him not only to see Christian theology as a Gnostic philosophy of religion, but also to explain how Gnosis should be followed based on its actual development through history. What one must realize here is that, for Baur, Gnosis is not only another word for religion; it is also the very concept which encapsulates his view of religion as philosophy and specifically of Christian theology as religious philosophy. This is why, throughout his works, he explains that Gnosis is to be read as a philosophy of religion. In other words, religion itself must be understood as philosophy, but such awareness comes only through the rational study of religion through history—an idea Baur confesses to have borrowed from Hegel. To be sure, Hegel is the pivotal point of intellectual history for Baur; before Hegel, religion was understood in a specific way, which Baur calls "the old philosophy of religion" or "the old Gnosis", while after Hegel, a new way of talking about religion, and implicitly about Gnosis, began to develop as authoritarian at least in academic circles. "The old philosophy of religion" therefore is basically the way theology was understood from antiquity to the time of Hegel; so Baur diligently discusses the idea of Gnosis—from Hegel's perspective or, as Baur puts it, the "new philosophy of religion"—as it developed through Manichaeism, Augustinianism, the Middle Ages, and the Reformation.

In conclusion, the most salient feature of Baur's rationalistic understanding of Gnosis as it developed through history is the dualism he sees almost everywhere, with the notorious exception of the Middle Ages which Baur dismisses as having been too occupied with dogmatic stability. Consequently, in its best form, religion is anything but stable as doctrine; the more complex, rational, and philosophical it is, the better. Baur likes conceptual pairs which explain his conviction that religion as rational Gnosis is fundamentally dualistic; for instance, sin and grace in Augustinianism, as well as law and Gospel in

Protestantism. Either way, however, in Baur the idea of Gnosis appears to be the essence of Christian theology redefined as a specific philosophy of religion which, under the influence of Böhme and Hegel, may preserve the traditional language of pre-Hegelian times (although it should be read in a dualistically esoteric and non-conventional key) while making it clear—based on a rationalistic methodology—that no ontologically real distinction between spirit and matter, as well as between God and man, can be allowed to exist in the academic study of religion pertaining to the post-Hegelian age. Baur therefore manages to present Gnosticism in a new light which no longer sees, as the traditional view proposes, the relationship between God and man, God and the world, and God and evil as conflicting realities or antagonistic forces. While their dualistic nature must be reconfirmed in conceptual terms, their separation needs to be abolished because, in Baur, spirit and matter, as well as God and man, cannot be explained nor can they be sustained as radically distinct in an intellectual framework dominated by Hegelian categories which can accept them exclusively as mutual dependence and ontological interpenetration.

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