

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF LUDWIG FEUERBACH'S ATHEISM

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Abstract

*The German philosopher Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach is regarded as the father of atheistic humanism. His critique of traditional metaphysics and the Christian religion attained its peak with his projection theory in his opus magnum *Das Wesen des Christentums (The Essence of Christianity, 1841)*. According to Feuerbach, the idea of God is really no more than the idea of our own human essence projected as a supernatural entity distinct from and opposed to us. Thus, for Feuerbach, religion is “the self-alienation of the human being, the division of the human being from himself.” Feuerbach believes that his critique of religion inaugurates the turning point of history when the human being becomes aware of his alienated divinity and reclaims it. His battle-cry is: “Homo homini Deus! which means “Human being is his own God.” The secret of Theology, Feuerbach concludes, is Anthropology. This essay critically examines the projection theory of Ludwig Feuerbach as the precursor of all projection, illusion and delusion theories of religion in order to refute and reject it. The essay argues that God is neither a human projection nor illusion nor delusion but the “Wholly Other” (Totaliter aliter) who is in a perduring dialogue with human beings.*

Keywords: Religion, Atheism, Humanism, Theology, Anthropology, Self-alienation, Projection theory.

Prologue

The question of the existence of God is one of the greatest questions raised by the human mind. Theists claim that God exists, while atheists deny such a claim, and agnostics remain cautiously skeptical, and each for a variety of reasons. But in order for the question to be answered responsibly and to prevent conceptual confusion, we must have in mind a proper understanding of who God is and who God is not, as well as precisely

what is being claimed by each possible position concerning the existence of God. In fact, the question of God's existence cannot be adequately answered without first answering the question of who God is. If God exists, who is He?

This essay is a critical appraisal of the atheistic humanism of Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-1872). *Ab initio*, Feuerbach assumed the theistic question as settled. According to him: "The question as to the existence or non-existence of God, the opposition between theism and atheism belongs to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but not to the nineteenth. I deny God. But that means that for me I deny the negation of man." Consequently, the denial or rejection of God is the first premise of his philosophy of religion. His atheism is the theoretical postulate for his notion of God as a human projection which he elaborated in his *opus magnum Das Wesen des Christentums* (The Essence of Christianity).

This essay comprises three main parts circumscribed by the prologue and the epilogue. The first part elucidates the concept and meaning of atheism. The second part critically analyses the atheistic humanism of Feuerbach, and the last part is a critical evaluation of Feuerbach's atheistic humanism.

The Concept and Meaning of Atheism

"Atheism" derives from the Greek root word "a-theos" which is a fusion of the Greek negating alpha (Α-) and the substantive "theos/to theion" (God/god).¹ Literally, it means without God/god. Originally, it means "atheist", "godless" or "ungodly" in the colloquial sense of being amoral or immoral.² Later on, the word "a-theos" acquired its negative sense of "atheism" as a denial of the existence of God, in contrast to theism which is the belief in God's existence. Therefore, atheism is defined in terms of that which it denies. It is the logical denial of theism.

The negating alpha (alpha privativum) denies or negates the substantive that follows it as illustrated by such Greek words like "a-nemia" (without blood, blood-less), "a-sthenia" (without power, power-less), a-cephalos (without head, head-less) a-phasia (without speech, speechless), a-boulia (without will-power), a-patheia (without passion, passion-less), "a-nomie" (without law, law-less), a-kinesia (without motion, motion-less). The English equivalent of negating alpha is *no, not, without or -less*. Moreover, it is also used for differentiating or distinguishing between similar terms that are not exactly the same, and not just for outright denying, negating or rejecting. Thuswise, Innocent Osuagwu argues that the alpha in "a-theos" functions not only as a "deprivative", but also as a

¹Cf. Thomas Mauthner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, ²2005), p. 52.

² Cf. Isidor F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 200.

“differential” particle. Hence, he talks about a “differential a-theism”, a category into which he classifies the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) as a “differential a-theist.”³

Another meaning of atheism is simply non-belief in the existence of God, rather than positive belief in the non-existence of God. These two different meanings are sometimes characterized as positive and negative atheism.⁴ Atheism is not only contrasted with theism, which, in its most general form, is the belief in the existence of God. It is also to be contrasted with polytheism, the belief in many gods, with henotheism, the belief in a principal god among many gods, with deism, the belief in God that is based not on revelation but on evidence from nature, with pantheism, the belief that God is identical with Nature; and with panentheism, the belief that God is in all things. It is also contrasted least with agnosticism, the position of neither believing nor disbelieving that God exists.⁵ In fact, the debate between theism and atheism, belief and unbelief is the linchpin of the history of Western thought.⁶ But this essay is limited to the atheism of the German Philosopher Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-1872).

Ludwig Feuerbach's Atheism

In the aftermath of the death of the German philosopher Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831), the focus of philosophical debate was the problem of God, and it was on this subject, and not primarily on political or social matters, that the split occurred between the right and left wing Hegelians. Ludwig Feuerbach assumed the leadership of the left wing. His purpose ran parallel to that of his contemporary and friend David Friedrich Strauß (1808-1874), historian of the origins of Christianity. As Strauß tried to account historically for the Christian illusion, Feuerbach tried to account psychologically for the Christian illusion in particular and for the illusion of religion in general. According to Strauß the Gospels are myths expressing the aspirations of the Jewish people.⁷ Feuerbach makes the parallel assertion that God is only a myth in which the aspiration of the human consciousness are expressed. According to him: “Those who have no desires have no gods

³ Innocent Osuagwu, *Differential A-theism: The Controversial Case of A Godly A-theist*, (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 1995), ch.4; Cf. Osuagwu, “Godly Atheism: Striking the Contrast between Atheism and A-theism” in *Live Witness Journal* (12th Edition, 2017), pp. 48-55.

⁴ William L. Rowe, “Atheism” in C. Edward (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1998), s.v.

⁵ Michael Martin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-2.

⁶ Cf. James Thrower, *A Short History of Western Atheism* (London: Pemberton Books, 1971), p. 16.

⁷ Friedrich David Strauß, *Life of Jesus* vol. I & II (1835/36).

either.... Gods are men's wishes in corporeal form.”⁸ Similarly, Strauß maintains that everything that the Church says about Christ was to be understood of humanity; that the first Christian community unconsciously had in mind the idea of humanity when it drew the portrait of Jesus; that all that faith had in a way incarnated in an individual, science was to restore to the Whole, to the Species.⁹ In fact, “the mythical theory” of Strauß corresponds to “the projection theory” of Feuerbach. But whereas Strauß’ theory led to a Christianity without Christ, that of Feuerbach ended in a religion without God.

Feuerbach’s Conception of God

In the introduction to *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach affirms that “Religion has its basis in the essential difference between man and the brute.”¹⁰ For him, the characteristic human mode of being, as distinct from that of the animal, is not only the basis, but also the object of religion. He argues that since religion is the consciousness of the infinite, it cannot be anything other than human being’s consciousness of his own essential nature understood not as a finite, but as an infinite nature. Thus Feuerbach prepares the ground for the enunciation of his “projection theory.”

Feuerbach begins with the analysis of what he calls “The True or Anthropological Essence of Religion.” The central thesis of Feuerbach is that God is a projection of the human mind. He considers the relation of the human being to God as the relation existing between the subject and the religious object respectively. He argues that in religion, consciousness of the object and self-consciousness coincide; the two are one and the same act. Hence, he writes: “...the object of any subject is nothing else than the subject’s own nature taken objectively. Such as are a man’s thought and dispositions, such is his God; ... Consciousness of God is self-consciousness. Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; conversely, God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man, - religion the solemn unveiling of man’s hidden treasures, the revelation of his intimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets.”¹¹

For Feuerbach, the idea of God springs out of the human being’s objective nature, contemplated and thought out as a distinct being. God is then viewed as nothing more than the human being, or better put, the human nature purified, made objective, freed and raised above the limits of the individual human being.

⁸ Ludwig Feuerbach, *La Religion; mort-immortalite-religion*, trans. by Joseph Roy (Paris: Libraire Internationale, 1864), pp. 115 & 117.

⁹ Albert Lévy, *David-Frédéric Strauss* (Paris: Alcan, 1910), pp.46, 60, 267.

¹⁰ Ludwig Feuerbach (1841), *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. M. Evans (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 1.

¹¹ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 12-13.

God as a projection of the human mind, according to Feuerbach, constitutes the essence of religion. Hence, he claims that: "Religion is the disuniting of man from himself, man sets God before him as the antithesis of himself, God is not what man is, man is equally not what God is. God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is perfect, man is imperfect; God is eternal, man temporal; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God and man are extremes: God is the absolutely positive, the sum of all realities; man the absolutely negative, comprehending all negations."¹²

Thus, for Feuerbach God is a being of the human understanding whose divine nature is the intelligence and reason of the human being, or the objective nature of the human understanding. He affirms that: "God as the antithesis of man, as a being not human, i.e., not personally human, is the objective nature of the understanding. The pure, perfect divine nature is the self-consciousness of the understanding, the consciousness which the understanding has of its own perfection."¹³ Furthermore, he writes: God as God, that is, a being not finite, not human, not materially conditioned, not phenomenal, is only an objective thought. He is the incorporeal, formless, incomprehensible – the abstract, negative being: he is known, i.e., becomes an object, only by abstraction and negation (*via negationis*)... The 'infinite spirit', in distinction from the finite, is therefore nothing else than the intelligence disengaged from the limits of individuality and corporeality, - for individuality and corporeality are inseparable, - intelligence posited in and by itself... God is a need of the intelligence, a necessary thought – the highest degree of the thinking power."¹⁴

Consequently, Feuerbach contends that God is not a separate and distinct existing phenomenon in itself. God is a result of the human intellectual activity, seen and considered as an existent being.

The human being's act of projection arises from his innermost desires. Being aware of his inabilities and limitations, the individual projects his being into a higher and perfect being capable of providing whatever he so desires. In this way: "God springs out of a feeling of want; what man is in need of, whether this be a definite and therefore conscious, or an unconscious need, that is God."¹⁵

The sense of limitation appears to be painful to the human being; hence, he tries to liberate himself from it by the contemplation of the perfect being. Thus, the human being

¹² Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p.29.

¹³ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., 34

¹⁴ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., pp.35-36.

¹⁵ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 73.

then possesses all those perfections lacking in him. Feuerbach considers this “idea of satisfaction” by the human species as that divine, individual und universal being. Hence he affirms that: “God is the idea of the species as an individual – the idea or essence of the species, which as a species, as universal being, as the totality of all perfections, of all attributes or realities, freed from the limits which exist in the consciousness and feeling of the individual, is at the same time again an individual, personal being. *Ipse suum esse est*. Essence and existence are in God identical; which means nothing else than that he is the idea, the essence of the species, conceived immediately as an existence, an individual.”¹⁶

According to Feuerbach, it is not God that created the human being in His image and likeness as recorded in the Book of Genesis (cf. Gen 1:26-27), rather it is the human being that creates God after his human image. The personality of the human being brings about the personality of God. He considers God’s personality as the projection of the personality of the human being. Hence he writes: “The personality of God is thus the means by which man converts the qualities of his own nature into the qualities of another being, - a being external to himself. The personality of God is nothing else than the projected personality of man.”¹⁷

Feuerbach further discusses what he designates as “The False or Theological Essence of Religion.” To explain this, he had recourse to the Hegelian concept of “alienation.”¹⁸ Whereas Hegel applied alienation to the Absolute Spirit, Feuerbach, reversing the relation of idea to the real, applied it in *The Essence of Christianity* to the human being. Feuerbach describes alienation as the existential condition in which the human being finds himself “dispossessed of something essentially belonging to him for the benefit of an illusive reality.”¹⁹ According to him, wisdom, will, justice and love are so many infinite attributes that constitutes man’s own being and that nevertheless affect him “as if it were another being.”²⁰ Thus he spontaneously projects and objectifies them beyond himself in a fantastic form. This pure projection of his imagination, he calls God. In this way, he defrauds himself. “It is one and the same act that strips the world of its content and transfers that content to God. The poor man possesses a rich God, or to be more precise, he impoverishes himself by enriching his God, in filling whom he empties himself. Thus he ‘affirms in God what he denies in himself.’”²¹

¹⁶ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 153.

¹⁷ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 226.

¹⁸ Allen W. Wood, “Alienation”, in C. Edward (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1998), s.v.

¹⁹ Jean Danielou, “Le foi en l’homme chez Marx”, in *Chronique sociale de France* (1938), p. 163ff.

²⁰ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 34.

²¹ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., pp. 50-51.

Consequently, Feuerbach sees God as only the sum of the attributes that make up the greatness of man. In a maxim closely reminiscent of Auguste Comte's law of the three stages, Feuerbach writes: "God was my first thought, reason my second, and man my third and last."²² Elsewhere he says: "It is the essence of man that is the supreme being.... If the divinity of nature is the basis of all religions, including Christianity, the divinity of man is its final aim.... The turning point of history will be the moment when man becomes aware that the only God of man is man himself. *Homo homini Deus!*"²³

If religion is not the relation of God to the human being as Feuerbach opines, but the relation of the human being to himself, then, that which investigates and explores religion invariably investigates and explores the human being. In other words, Theology is simply Anthropology.

The goal of Feuerbach's critique of religion is to establish his "anthropo-theism", the belief that man is God. Hence he sums up his philosophy of religion thus: "We have shown that the substance and object of religion is altogether human, we have shown that divine wisdom is human wisdom; that the secret of theology is anthropology... Religion is the first form of self-consciousness... But that which in religion holds the first - namely, God - is, as we have shown, in itself and according to the truth, the second, for it is only the nature of man regarded objectively; and that which to religion is the second - namely, man - must therefore be constituted and declared the first... *Homo homini Deus est*: - this is the great practical principle: - this is the axis on which revolves the history of the world."²⁴

In plain words, Feuerbach rejects theism *in toto* arguing that the human being is his own god.

Feuerbach's Conception of Christ

Feuerbach did not end his critique of religion with his theory of God as God, he equally delved deeper into what he refers to as the God of the Christians in whom the essence of Christianity lies. By this Christian God, Feuerbach alludes to Christ whom Christians believe is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He analyses this Christian belief in the Trinity and identifies it in the human being himself. According to him: "Only a being who comprises in himself the whole man can satisfy the whole man. Man's consciousness of himself in his totality knits together the qualities or powers which were before regarded

²² Feuerbach, *La Religion*, p.348.

²³ Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, p. 27.

²⁴ Feuerbach, *Op. Cit.*, pp.270-271.

separately into unity, and thereby reduces the universal being of the understanding, i.e., God as God, to a special being, a special faculty... The so-called images by which it has been sought to illustrate the Trinity, and make it comprehensible, are principally: mind, understanding, memory, will, love...”²⁵ Like Strauß, Feuerbach seeks to demystify or rather demythologize the Christian belief in the Incarnation of Christ. Among the five qualities which comprise the Trinity, he associates the person of Christ with the power of love. He underlines that the mystery of the Incarnation is nothing more than the consciousness of divine love. The mystery of the Incarnation reveals that Christ took a human flesh and assumed the state of mortal man out of God’s love for humanity. He claims that the Incarnation is no more than the practical, material manifestation of the human nature of God. In fact, God did not become human being for his own sake, but for the sake of human being. Thus, he believes that human being was essentially God before he showed himself as human being in the context of God becoming human being. Hence, he writes: “But the incarnate God is only the apparent manifestation of deified man; for the descent of God to man is necessarily preceded by the exaltation of man to God. Man was already in God, man was already God himself, before God became man, i.e., showed as man. How otherwise could God become man?”²⁶ Furthermore, Feuerbach insists that the incarnate God is a human God and nothing more. “... According to him, the idea of Incarnation is nothing more than the human form of a God, who already in his nature, in the profoundest depths of his soul, is a merciful and therefore a human God.”²⁷ By this claim, Feuerbach subsumes the divinity of Christ in his humanity. Thus Christ is stripped of his divine nature and existence and is ascribed the existence of human nature alone.

Feuerbach also highlights the Passion of Christ as an essential part of the mystery of the Incarnation. He identifies the Incarnate God with divine love which attests to itself by suffering. In his opinion, all thoughts and feelings which are immediately associated with Christ concentrate themselves in the idea of the Passion. Hence, he posits: “God as God is the sum of all human perfection; God as Christ is the sum of all human misery... If God as *actus purus*, as pure activity, is the God of abstract philosophy; so, on the other hand, Christ, the God of the Christian, is the *passio pura*, pure suffering - the highest metaphysical thought, the *être supreme* of the heart.”²⁸

Feuerbach asserts that nothing makes more impression on the heart than suffering, especially, the suffering of one exalted above suffering and also believed to be innocent, but who however endures the suffering purely for the good of others. This is nothing more

²⁵ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 65.

²⁶ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 50.

²⁷ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 51.

²⁸ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 59.

than the suffering of love, and more still, a sacrifice of oneself out of love. And this love comes from the heart. Hence he writes: "God suffers means in truth nothing else than: God is a heart. The heart is the source, the center of all suffering. A being without suffering is a being without a heart. The mystery of the suffering God is therefore the mystery of feeling, sensibility. A suffering God is a feeling, sensitive God... Therefore, the feeling, sensitive man believes only in a feeling, sensitive God, i.e., he believes only in the truth of his own existence and nature, for he can believe in nothing else than that which is involved in his own nature."²⁹

As part of his analysis of the Trinity, Feuerbach elucidates the person of Christ and his relationship as God the Son to God the Father. He contends that God as God is a simple being, absolutely alone, absolutely solitude and self-sufficing. He affirms that solitude is the want of the thinker, whereas society is the want of the heart. Love, for him, is a relative quality. One can think alone, but can only love with another. Feuerbach argues that from a solitary God, the essential need of duality, of love, and the real completed self-consciousness of the *alter ego* is excluded. Hence religion satisfies this want. Thus, in the solitude of the Divine Being, religion places a second, different from God as to personality, but identical with him in essence. This he explains as God the Son in distinction from God the Father. Feuerbach sees God the Father as *I*, and God the Son as *Thou*. According to him, the *I* is understanding, the *Thou* is love. Hence, love with understanding and understanding with love is mind, and mind is the totality of man; the realization of the total man. It is worthy of note here that this view of the I-Thou relationship between God the Father and God the Son supposedly influenced the thoughts of the Jewish Philosopher of religion Martin Buber (1878-1965), the French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), and the Swiss Protestant Theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968). This is to count the least of numerous renowned thinkers who were either directly or indirectly influenced by the philosophy of Feuerbach.

As regards the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, Feuerbach says that the third person is an expression nothing more than the love of the two divine persons toward each other. For him, the third person of the Trinity is the unity of the Son and the Father; the idea of community which although in a strange way is conceived and regarded as special personal being.

At the beginning of his Heidelberg lectures delivered in 1848 and later published as *The Essence of Religion*, Feuerbach indicated that: "The goal of my work is to make men no

²⁹ Feuerbach, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 62-63.

longer theologians but anthropologists, to lead them from love of God to love of men, from hopes for the beyond to the study of things here below; to make them, no longer the base religious or political servants of a monarchy and an aristocracy of heaven and earth, but free and independent citizens of this universe.”³⁰ Towards the end, he reiterated that the aim of his philosophy is to change “the friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, worshippers into workers, candidates for the other world into students of this world, Christians, who on their own confession, are half-animal and half-angel, into men – whole men.”³¹ At this juncture, it’s pertinent to remark that he succeeded only too well.

Critical Evaluation of Feuerbach’s Atheistic Humanism

In the light of the foregoing, it can be affirmed without any hesitation that Feuerbach’s philosophy as a whole marks a turning point in the history of Western philosophy. It is the turn from the science of God to the science of the human being, from Theology to Anthropology, from Theo-centrism to Anthro-centrism, from Theo-metricism to Anthro-metricism. His major work *The Essence of Christianity* inaugurated the so-called “Drama of Atheistic Humanism.”³² The German philosopher and founder of scientific socialism Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) mentions the extraordinary “impression of deliverance” felt by many young men of his generation on reading *The Essence of Christianity*. The disciples of Hegel were at that time laboriously threshing about in the toils of contradiction. “At one blow it was demolished. This was a potent stimulus.” In addition: “There was widespread enthusiasm.” “We all straightaway became Feuerbachians.” He is scarcely exaggerating. The impression it made on people was of something definitive; of a perfectly clear revelation, as if the scales had at last fallen from all eyes; it was like a full stop put to discussions that had been going on for thousand years and had suddenly become pointless; of an end to the illusion of religious faith and the adventures of idealist speculation. It seems like the solution to the human problem has been found and there was nothing left more to seek.

Another great thinker that was inspired and influenced by Feuerbachianism was Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883). He praises Feuerbach for having dispelled “the old quibbles” and set up human being in their place.³³ He regards him as a “second Luther” in the history of human emancipation and reiterates for philosophers and theologians alluding to the meaning of the name “Feuer-bach” (stream of fire, burning brook) that “No other path

³⁰ Feuerbach, *The Essence of Religion*, p. 14.

³¹ Feuerbach, Op. Cit., p. 170.

³² Cf. Henri De Lubac, *Le Drame de l’humanisme athée* (1944), trans. by E.M. Riley et al., *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

³³ Karl Marx, *Die heilige Familie*, vol. 2.

to freedom and truth exists for you than through Feuerbach. Feuerbach is the purgatory of our time.”³⁴

Evaluating the philosophy of Feuerbach, Frederick Copleston wrote: “If regarded from a purely theoretical standpoint, Feuerbach’s philosophy is certainly not outstanding. For example, his attempt to dispose of theism by an account of the genesis of the idea of God is superficial. But from the historical point of view his philosophy possesses real significance. In general, it forms part of a movement away from a theological interpretation of the world to an interpretation in which man himself, considered as a social being, occupies the center of the stage. Feuerbach’s substitution of anthropology for theology is an explicit acknowledgement of this... In particular, the philosophy of Feuerbach is a stage in the movement which culminated in the dialectical materialism and the economic theory of Marx and Engels.”³⁵

In spite of the aforementioned revolutionary influence of Feuerbach, his atheistic theory is riddled with some of the errors common to atheists.³⁶ In fact, his projection theory is a pure “psychological construct”. Feuerbach’s projection theory is a good example of the straw man fallacy. It is a fallacy in which an opponent’s position is depicted as being more extreme or unreasonable than is justified by what was actually asserted. Furthermore, one may view it as a form of “the red herring fallacy”³⁷, because it also introduces a distraction from the real dispute. In this case, however, the distraction is of a particular kind: it is an effort to shift the conflict from its original complexity into a different conflict, between parties other than those originally in dispute. In relation to the projection theory, Feuerbach deflects attention from the real problem of the existence or non-existence of God, from the age long controversy between the theists and atheists and constructs the object of religion as a fantastic projection in order to dismiss it. Moreover, he conceives the religious relationship between God and man as a delusive dichotomy which he resolved in favour of man as God.

Like his notion of God, his notion of Christ is also a product of false and fallacious reasoning. His conception of Christ is a far cry from the orthodox understanding of Christ as true God (*verus Deus*) and true man (*verus homo*). Here again he attempts to separate the human nature from the divine nature of Christ united in the one Person of the Son of God in order to resolve the apparent antagonism in favour of human nature enthroned as

³⁴ Karl Marx, “Luther arbitre entre Strauss et Feuerbach”, in *Anekdoten*, vol. 2, no.7 (1843), p. 206.

³⁵ Copleston, F., *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, Part II (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 299-300.

³⁶ Cf. J. Angelo Corlett, *The Errors of Atheism* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), chapter two.

³⁷ A fallacy in which attention is deliberately deflected away from the issue under discussion.

God. Hence his philosophical Christology falls short of what Christians since more than two thousand years believe about Christ, the Son of God and God the Son. Just as his philosophical theology was a “God-less delusion”, his philosophical Christology was no less a “Christ-less delusion.” Hence, Feuerbach was not only atheist and antitheist, but also a-christ³⁸ and anti-christ, one who denies that Jesus is the Christ (cf. 1 Jn 2:22).

Epilogue

In conclusion, the arguments of Feuerbach against the existence of God just like the arguments of other atheists before and after him are inconclusive and implausible. His projection theory is nothing more than a delusive, dismissive and bellicose dogmatism that vaunts to put an end to the perennial question of God. Hence the burden of proof (onus probandi) still lies on the atheist to prove beyond reasonable doubt that God does not exist.

³⁸ This neologism derives from the Greek “a-christos” (Christ-less) coined by the author on 31.7.2022 after the Greek “a-theos”.