

# Ludwig Feuerbach: Das Wesen des Christentums. Sakramente, Glaube und Liebe und Schlussanwendung (Kapitel 26-28)

## Ludwig Feuerbach: The Essence of Christianity. Sacraments, Faith and Love and Conclusion (Chapters 26-28)

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### Abstract

This text presents an interpretation of the chapters 26, 27 and 28 in Ludwig Feuerbach's "The Essence of Christianity". The examination focuses on Feuerbach's critique of sacraments such as his critique of baptismal water as a symbol of salvation or bread as the Body of Christ at the Last Supper. Feuerbach contests the supernatural attributes ascribed to these objects as they are products of nature. The author argues that Feuerbach's focus on an ontological interpretation of Christianity blots out its messianic dimension. The latter has the capability to open the world to meaning that transcends the separation of subject and object. Through the analysis of Hegel's early theological writings, the article shows that objects are never pure objects but exist exclusively as symbols in an inter-subjective framework of interpretations. Therefore the world is symbolic and not object-like and it arises in processes of interpretation, decoding and reading. The paper argues that the event of transubstantiation is bound to a two-fold decoding. The first one implies that bread and wine, the matter of transubstantiation, become symbols of human nature as they are products of nature sublated into spirit through work. The second one transforms these symbols into the messianic corpus of Jesus which becomes the essence of world understood as radical dedication. The messianic decoding of Being transcends causal-chronological time and transforms Being into an affective, dedicative and intersubjective exchange. Feuerbach's argument that religion has heteronomous character is thus finally countered by the author's claim that faith cannot be reduced to an object-like content but is itself a process of messianic interpretation, whose criterion is the openness of the logos and the key to this openness is a devotion to the radical freedom of the other.

**Keywords:** Feuerbach, Agamben, Hegel, Christianity, Transsubstantiation, Sacrament, Sign, Language, Messianism, Baptism, Criticism of Religion, Philosophy of Religion