

# INTIMACY WITH GOD: K. CH. FR. KRAUSE'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

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“Religion is the beginning and end of human perfection; he lives only who  
lives in God”

(Krause, 1811: 84)

**Abstract.** This paper deals with the concept of religiousness and religion in the context of Krause's panentheist metaphysics, understood as a life of union, as intimacy of and with God, particularly on the part of human beings and also in relation to the rest of the existing. An evolutionary review of this conception of religion is undertaken throughout Krause's work, and the program of a philosophy of religion is traced, which, besides a metaphysical and anthropological substantiation, would address an understanding of the history of religions and especially of Christianity, proposing a vision of reciprocal illumination between religion, knowledge, feeling and morality, as well as the possibility of an appealing notion of religious freedom, the hallmark of Krausism in its historical development.

## I. KRAUSE'S IDEA OF RELIGION: "INTIMACY AND THE LIFE OF UNION WITH GOD", AND THE FORMULATION OF PANENTHEISM

When enquiring about Krause's ideas on religion and the religious dimension, we should bear in mind that K. Ch. Fr. Krause (1781–1832) was a German philosopher chronologically located in the post-Kantian and idealist philosophy that generated great systems that addressed questions ranging from the

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first principle to the fundamental spheres of knowledge and human action (science, law, history, art, religion). Krause's philosophy is thus a systematic approach that falls historically within the framework of German Idealism. German Idealism is the immediate heir of the Enlightenment and dialogues very directly with Kant's philosophy, trying in turn to solve some questions considered unsettled in critical philosophy that prevented the completion of the definitive system of a new philosophy based on reason, freedom and human creation in all its dimensions throughout history. In this whole process, religion did not remain for German thought a matter of the past or of the *Ancien Régime*, due above all to the enlivened and plural religious discussion that the Lutheran Reformation brought about in German kingdoms and principalities. The Reformation and everything produced by it was implied in the very cultural identity of the German language as a language suitable for knowledge, theology and philosophy.

This survival of religion was not an obstacle in German thinking for a profound critique and revision of the concept of religion and of ideas directly related to the Christian tradition, such as revelation, faith, or, on a more properly philosophical level, for a critique and revision of the various proofs of the existence of God. Nor was the process of secularization of many theological ideas and approaches to human, historical or moral knowledge truncated. German Idealism in a general sense posed again a reflection on religion that was different from the more typically enlightened vision, including that of Kant himself, which posited revelation itself and religion, especially Christianity, in line with universal moral reason, and perhaps therefore comparable to it. Following one path or another, and not without controversy, as in the polemic on atheism in which Fichte was involved, idealist thinkers did not simply equate religion and morality, but did delve into the specifically religious in the full scope of the different dimensions of the human. This was already the case with Fichte, particularly in his late production, and especially with Schelling and Hegel. It is also the case with Krause. Moreover, in his work religion has from the outset a clear and distinct delimitation regarding the moral sphere. Morality directly affects action and the attainment of what is essential; religion, however, is at the very basis of the conception of the real; it is not that, as we shall see, religion and morality do not have profound implications and relations, but they will have these like true religion will, with respect to the scientific and philosophical attitude (Krause, 1829: 327 ff.). For

this, it is necessary to review the evolution and delimitation of the idea of religion and religiousness throughout Krause's work. Like other philosophers of his time, Krause studied theology as well as philosophy (he also studied mathematics); on the other hand, under the influence of his father, a Protestant pastor, he got first-hand knowledge of the theological thinking of the time. Out of his irrepressible curiosity, Krause would also learn about other religious traditions, such as Hinduism, from its original sources.

In one of his first works, the *Fundament of Natural Law* (1803), published during his teaching period at the University of Jena, Krause already speaks of "religiousness". It appears alongside other human ideals, such as wisdom, love and art, always emphasizing its synthetic purpose, that is, the capacity to bring together the other ideals. The fact is that religiousness is what enables us to feel "the intuition of the infinite" (Krause, 1803: 193), and this is an essential element in all knowledge and understanding. Thus, in this initial notion, religion, far from being alien or contrary to reason, favours its development and its rooting in the same human destiny:

Without an immediate and intimate knowledge of the infinite and of the conformity to law of the world (providence, God), one could not conceive of his [man's] destiny, much less realize it; and this conviction is religious faith, and the active love for the ideals of reason that is born of it, expressed as the love of virtue and morality, is religiousness, devotion. (Krause, 1803: 96, brackets are mine).

In this text we can see his concern to unite in religion the more theoretical aspects with the practical-moral ones, rooted in love for the ideals of reason revealed as religiousness itself. Krause interprets at all times religious traditions and convictions as relevant elements of man's destiny; not as despicable or alienating elements. But in interpreting them, he also translates them into a philosophical language that turns more accurate. In this first meaning, the religious attitude is translated as an intuition of the infinite, a direct and intimate intuition, which sustains our place in the world, our horizon of understanding and sense of both the natural order and our actions. We are before an undoubtedly conciliatory vision of faith and knowledge, almost in an Augustinian way, which, far from restraining reason, favours and encourages it, and not out of a desire to dominate, but out of love, both for knowledge and virtue.

Krause's thought moved forward from his initial metaphysical harmonic vision, in which that intuition of the infinite brought us, almost immediately, a synthetic vision of man and the universe, of knowledge and action. As Krause expounds his initial philosophical conceptions, on the one hand, the need arises to establish a method leading and initiating thinking in a progressive manner, and not confronting the subject with an absolute starting axiom<sup>2</sup>, which could lead philosophy to incur in dogmatism. On the other hand, Krause also weighs in with the precaution of a unitary vision that ends up admitting a harmonic pantheism of everything that exists, including the world in its various orders, and man with all his actions<sup>3</sup>. We know that pantheism had taken hold in many German thinkers of the 18th century, inspired by the logical force of the approach of Spinoza's *Ethica*, which reconciled the ancient idea of pantheism equating God with the world with the modern idea of substance as the one which is the absolute cause of itself. In spite of the initial philosophical coherence of this mode of pantheism, there remained pending accounts, and not only for the more traditionally scholastic conception, which feared the abolition of the infinite distance between God and man or, even worse, a new paganization of the idea of God, which would end up identifying him with nature (*Deus sive natura*). These were already weighty signs of warning, no doubt, but no less so were those that accused pantheism, and actually the God of philosophers, of not being a God to whom one could pray, being a supreme but impersonal entity. This critical path, already present in Pascal, strongly emerged in Jacobi's criticisms. Krause took note of these objections, and considered both prayer and the idea of the person, intimacy and the life of God, as a challenge to be philosophically reread from the heritage of great religions, especially Christianity.

With some perspective regarding his first philosophical conception, developed in his years of teaching at the University of Jena, Krause's system

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2 This had been the beginning of the System he set out in 1804 K.C.F. Krause, *Ausgewählte Schriften, I: Entwurf des Systems der Philosophie* (frommann-holzboog, 2007), 53.

3 On the consideration of Krause's first conceptions as pantheism, as well as on the precautions against this and also against philosophical dogmatism, it is particularly enlightening: R. V. Orden Jiménez, *El sistema de la filosofía de Krause. Génesis y desarrollo del Panenteísmo* (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1998), Chaps II and IV. See also R. V. Orden Jiménez, "La relación de intimidad del hombre con Dios: el panenteísmo de Krause", in *La actualidad del krausismo en su contexto europeo*, ed. E. M. Ureña and P. Álvarez Lazaro (Fundación Duques de Soria, Editorial Parteluz, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1999).

matured in the city of Dresden, and he went on to deepen his metaphysical ideas about God and the foundations of the real. But also, perhaps inspired by or converging with the philanthropic and universalist ideals of Freemasonry<sup>4</sup>, he substantiated a rich and articulated idea of Humankind and the human. These two lines forged what became panentheism, a fundamental key to Krause's philosophical vision, and they also led to an interesting purification and deepening of the idea of religiousness and religion as such.

*The Ideal of Humanity* was published in 1811. It is Krause's most outstanding work, in which the idea of Humankind as the harmonious centre of nature and spirit was explained within the framework of a pantheistic conception of God, in order to develop from there on a complete practical philosophy that embraced and articulated all the spheres of the human. This work, although of a philosophical-practical nature, begins with a systematic exposition of the fundamental spheres of the real, starting with God, and following with reason or the realm of the spirit and nature, as fundamental spheres within it and at the same time different or transcended by God as supreme Being (*Urwesen*). Krause describes how around 1808 he understood the pantheistic vision that led him to see everything in God, and at the same time, it should be said, with the supreme Being overflowing or transcending everything that exists. Krause wishes to go beyond the aporias of pantheism and deism, proposing a plural form of conceiving God. On the one hand, as totality, in whose infinite determinability the various beings arise. On the other hand, in the sense of great monotheisms, as a transcendent God who differentiates and surpasses the entire universe as a whole, and moreover, a being who is found in this development with an infinite life and a personality, also with intimacy and self-consciousness.

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4 It should be remembered that Krause valued Freemasonry as the incipient seed of his social ideals and of the conception of a League of Humanity based on the purely human, beyond all distinctions of status, creed or race. Krause joined 1805 the lodge "Archimedes of the three Boards" (Altenburg, and later, also in 1805, changed to the lodge "The three swords and the true friends" in Dresden.) He had an important activity within the lodge, publishing in 1810 an important work on the origins of Freemasonry in its original documents, which earned him expulsion from the Masonic brotherhood, favoured by the most conservative sectors. Coinciding with the centenary of his birth (1882), Krause and his legacy as a historian and researcher of Freemasonry were rehabilitated by the Masonic institution itself: cf. Ureña (1991) 105 ff; K.C.F. Krause, *Ausgewählte Schriften, II: Philosophisch-freimaurerische Schriften* (frommann-holzboog, 2008).

From this point of view, it is no wonder that *The Ideal of Humanity* begins with God: “To think and feel God is the most precious treasure of the human being”. God is the first truth that needs no further proof, and from there on all science is made and all human creation arises. In this approach religion is nothing but that “inner dealings with God” (Krause 2018: 3)<sup>5</sup>. From what has already been expounded, we can state that the articulation of Krause’s thought on God is not resolved in a dissolving pantheistic proclamation, as was actually received and interpreted by conservative Catholic sectors in Spain. Krause was well aware of the critique of pantheism Jacobi had highlighted against authors such as Lessing and Mendelssohn, and precisely, the pantheistic approach intends to overcome the problem of the God-world indistinction, without falling into the incoherent or unredeemed split of the finite with respect to totality.

This attempt to mediate between philosophical pantheism and its critics certainly runs through the metaphysics and philosophy of religion of German Idealism. However, Krause’s proposal is not only a speculative operation, but aspires to work in the infinite interiority and intimacy of God; it assumes from the outset the transcendence of the latter regarding the world, and pins in that transcendence that third sphere, which is interior to the same absolute that completes and revolutionizes the Spinozist blueprint of nature and spirit. Both are intersected and transcended in their immanence to the absolute Being (*Wesen*) or God.

Yet regarding the subject that concerns us, it must be emphasized that the Krausian notion of religion is not expanded in its relevance to the point of being identified just like that with metaphysics itself. Krause assumes the historical and personal fact of religious belief and its most characteristic attitudes (prayer, revelation, faith) as a plural and evolving reflection of that inner dealings of men and peoples with God, and in the exposition of *The Ideal of Humanity* itself, religiousness lives on, understood and redefined as the life of union with God (*Gottvereinleben*), which is revealed as intimacy of and with God (*Gottinnigkeit*) (intimacy with God) (Krause, 1829: 325 f.)<sup>6</sup>, as

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5 The first quotation is the first one in this work. At the end of the first two paragraphs, we read explicitly: “And so we begin with God”: *ibid.*, 5. The pagination of the edition quoted follows that of the first edition of this work in 1811.

6 Although I follow an evolutionary exposition, it is useful to keep in mind the presentation of the “Science of Religion” published by Krause in his *Lectures on the Fundamental Truths*

a fundamental aspect of Humanity, that is, of the most harmonious and intimate being of the real, where nature and the spirit coexist in the transcendent openness and attainment of the same destiny and determination of God.

*The Ideal of Humanity* reveals the process that will lead Krause to redefine religiousness and religiosity as *Intimacy with God*. The starting point leading to this conception is the inquiry on the fundamental forces of Humanity, that is, those ideals that help and enable man to achieve his destiny, which, according to the panentheistic approach, consists in realizing within his finitude what conforms to God, something that his more mature work will equate to Being (*Wesen*), assuming that Humankind is the most harmonious and intimate being in which all spheres intersect. Let us remember that the destiny of Humanity assumes these forces in order to make some concrete *works* possible, which essentially determine the destiny of the human. These *fundamental works* of Humanity are science, art, in a broad sense, and education and training; the latter as a work that Humankind carries out unto itself.

According to this panentheistic approach, we could think that this attainment of human destiny and its works is almost confused with an activity oriented towards the development and fulfillment of the infinite determinability of God, and therefore that all human works and actions will require a force that could be called religious, or at least oriented toward God. On the other hand, these forces, although they live in a suitable way in the human, should be thought of for all beings, both in the sphere of nature and in that of the spirit. Undoubtedly, this was Krause's approach, but that does not mean that his proposal is dissolved in an indistinct metaphysics where all the powers of the real merge in a sort of indefinite religious dimension. As important as the ontological affinity and congruence between all the levels of the real, is for the spirit of Krause's philosophy the difference and delimitation of diverse spheres, both of the human with respect to the rest of what is real, as well as of the religious dimension regarding the other spheres. For this reason, Krause offers us a specific description of religiosity, regardless of what has

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*of Science* in 1829, one of his mature works, together with his fundamental systematic work: his *Lectures on the System of Philosophy* (Krause, 1828). We have been translating "Innigkeit" as "Intimacy", because it captures the aspect of interiority as well as the possible close and complete relationship with someone else. "Inwardness" would be another possible translation, yet we believe that this term is more limited regarding the meaning of self-perception and relationship with oneself.

been pointed out, that is, without questioning the religious horizon in all action and work of man, and in a certain sense of all beings.

When Krause sets forth the fundamental *forces* that make possible the realization of human destiny, he starts from concepts and ideals proper to the political program of the Enlightenment, invoking the concepts of *virtue*, *right* and *justice*. These concepts have an indisputable relevance in Krausian practical philosophy, and here they find their foundation in the very idea of Humankind and in the panentheistic metaphysical framework. In any case, these forces reach out to two other no less important forces: *love* and *beauty*, making man complete himself as a being in intimate relationship and in the likeness of God. These two important concepts (love and beauty), with Platonic and Augustinian roots, are added in a harmonious way to the ideals of justice and virtue and complete the whole of the fundamental forces of humanity. It is then within the broad development of the idea of love and the life of exchange (*Wechselleben*) (Krause, 2018: 100 ff.) that the idea of religiousness as Intimacy with God takes shape. It is both a specific place and a summit, so that religiousness becomes a crucial form of the whole human life: “thus he (man) heads towards a suprasensible and ineffable relationship of love and life with God; he receives the blessing of religion”; stating further on that “(o)nlý religion completes the human being as God’s organ, full of life and social, in accordance with all beings (*Ibid.*: 65)<sup>7</sup>.

“The flame of love,” says Krause, allows us to approach and receive enlightenment about the complex “labyrinth of human sociability” (*Ibid.*: 59), and once we assume this fundamental feeling and disposition, we immediately rise to God, as a supreme and all-embracing being who loves all his creatures in an infinite way, and who permits the relationship of these among themselves at all levels. This is why the idea of “intimacy” is open to all beings (*Ibid.*: 236 f; 245). This love and life open to exchange start for Krause from an inner impulse in each being leading them to meet and relate to others. This is what he calls *intimacy*, which as we see implies both interiority and a relationship and bond with the other beings (*Ibid.*: 181). In accordance with the harmonious essence of the human, human intimacy is governed both by nature and by the spirit and culminates in its openness to God, and it is in Him that the human fully recognizes its essence and destiny. Here we would

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7 The first brackets are mine.



speak of an intimacy towards or with God, but Krause assumes that in God himself there also exists this condition of intimacy; indeed, it is in Him that it is first and essentially given. He is not afraid that this may be an anthropomorphic derivation or projection; rather he understands the opposite, that is, that the idea of intimacy is not exclusive or does not culminate in man, but has its origins in the very life and personality of God as supreme and absolute being. In a later development of the complete system of his philosophy, published in 1828, Krause approaches the topic of intimacy starting with self-consciousness, defining it as being certain of knowledge, feeling and will, directed precisely towards the fundamental Being (God), as the horizon of all human action. Once thus defined, it is expressly indicated that human intimacy is subordinate to the intimacy of God (Krause 1828: 254)<sup>8</sup>; that is, God possesses this capacity of self-consciousness at the three levels of knowledge, feeling and will, and this is one of the fundamental features of the life and person of God.

Identifying the notions of *religion* and *religiousness* with the intimacy of God is assumed in *The Ideal of Humanity*, and this is reflected in the subsequent planning of the various fundamental leagues of human forces and works, in which a League does not appear for Religion but for Intimacy with God (*Gottinnigkeitbund*), although Krause continues to use the term "Religion"<sup>9</sup> in some passages. The following passage clarifies the relationship between these terms:

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8 On the metaphysical relevance of the concept of Intimacy with God, we must mention again the article by Orden Jiménez.

9 In his writings on Humanity contemporary to *The Ideal of Humanity*, which appeared in the *Diary of the Life of Humankind* (Krause 1811), published by Krause himself, the term "Religion" and its derivatives are even more frequent, together with the German terms indicated (especially *Gottinnigkeit*). We must remember that this is the text that Sanz del Río translated and published as *Ideal de la Humanidad para la vida* (Madrid 1860). In light of the articulation of the text in Spanish and the introduction of some headings by Sanz del Río, it is clear how religion, together with science, art, family and the state, is an ever-present sphere in Krause's philosophical-social analysis. See the comparative texts of the German original and the translation by Sanz del Río in the valuable edition by E. M. Ureña, J. L. Fernández, and J. Seidel, *El «Ideal de la Humanidad» de Sanz del Río y su original alemán* (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1997), an essential work for a revision of Spanish Krausism as an major European phenomenon. Cf. also in this respect: E. M. Ureña, "El krausismo como fenómeno europeo", in *La actualidad del krausismo en su contexto europeo*, ed. E. M. Ureña and P. Álvarez Lazaro (Fundación Duques de Soria, Editorial Parteluz, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1999).

The love for God and the determination arising from this to become like God through the interior and spiritual relationship of man with God, like that of child and father, constitutes the intimacy with God, the religion of man. Man is, according to his essence, religious, he is that being in the world who possesses the greatest intimacy with God [...] his sense is the most delicate and the strongest, his spirit the most full of feeling and the richest, his virtue the most versatile and the most beautiful. Love is the soul of religion, love is its first commandment. (Krause 2018: 116)<sup>10</sup>

In an illuminating note in his *Compendium of the System of the Philosophy of Natural Law* (1828), we can read: “I have shaped words *gottinnig*, *Gottinnigkeit*, *Gottinneseyn* in order to use them instead of religious, religiosity, religion, German terms more in accordance (See “Urbild der Menschheit”). *Gottinnigkeit* refers both to the intimacy of God with himself and with all beings, and to the intimacy of all rational beings with God...” (Krause 1828th: 60; cf. also Krause 1829: 327)<sup>11</sup>.

Whenever Krause speaks of religion in various passages of *The Ideal of Humanity* and in his complete exposition of the *System of Philosophy* (Krause 1828: 383, 423, 538; also Krause 1829: 524), intimacy with God appears together with the *life of union* with Him as a defining element of religion. Actually the whole tendency of knowledge, feeling and will towards God and the union with Him, love towards God in a word, would make the broadest and richest concept of religion and religiousness as an essential tendency and dimension in humanity in a special way, seen in all beings in a latent way (Krause 2018: 101 ff. ; Krause 1828: 401, 425, 538; Krause 1829: 529), and it is that relationship of nature, spirit and Humankind with God that grounds the very idea of religion when it comes to be approached philosophically and scientifically. The beginning of the exposition of the “Science of Religion” in the *Lectures on the Fundamental Truths of Science* (Krause 1829), one of the last works published by Krause, offers us a very enlightening passage on the idea of religion, differentiated here also from that of religiousness. In it he appeals to the usual meaning, yet all that is pointed out is nevertheless very revealing:

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10 The expression *Gottinnigkeit* appears with the word *Religiosität* in brackets in the index referring to these passages ( K.C.F. Krause, *Ausgewählte Schriften V: Das Urbild der Menschheit. Ein Versuch. Dresden 1811* (frommann-holzboog, 2018), 427) .

11 We can see from the allusion to the *Ideal of Humanity* (*Urbild der Menschheit*) in this work that Krause considered himself to have coined this concept.

By religion we understand in its general meaning the situation of life in which man knows, feels, loves God, directs his will towards the good as the divine, and imitates God in his whole life. By religiousness we understand the propriety and the aspiration to have religion. (Krause, 1829: 523).

Regardless of terms and definitions, we cannot fail to notice that the Krausian idea of religion tends to be identified with the general horizon of all beings in their relationship with totality, and in a special way in men, as harmonious beings where all the spheres of the real meet. The religious appears, for all the above, as a dimension and an attitude very directly related to the formulation and development of panentheism. This identification is coherent with the placement of the treatment of religion as a concept both practical and metaphysical, as some kind of culmination and synthesis of the whole system<sup>12</sup>. It could be said that other ideas such as that of beauty, understood as the likeness to God of each being in its finitude, are also found in the end, both in the inquiry on the forces and their fundamental *leagues* (also called *forms*) and on Krausian metaphysics (the synthetic part of the system) (Pinilla 2002: 411 ff: 548 ff). But it is undoubtedly the idea of religion the one that embraces all the planes of human action in a more complete way, as well as in some way the history itself of man in his search for the absolute in various cultures and times. If there is an element that provides the practical foundation of the idea of Religion in the context of the Ideal of Humanity, it is the culmination of the idea of social relationship as love, it is there that the derivation of the general concept of intimacy to *Intimacy with God* is clarified. *Religiousness* for Krause has much to do with the deepest aspiration of all love; we must in fact remember that in this passage religiousness is defined as the propriety and the "aspiration" (*Streben*) of "having religion", that is, an impetus, an impulse and a desire that speaks for this tendential, relational (social) and loving background of religion per se. This aspiration, on the other hand, is not a mere desire disconnected from other spheres of the human condition, but an aspiration in which all the dimensions of the subject are brought into play. In this sense, Krause does not fail to appeal to his triadic conception of man and of the very life of God, of knowing, feeling and willing as indispensable elements to approach the true idea of the religious (Krause, 1829: 527 ff.). This

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12 It can be seen, for example, that the subject of religion appears in the first formulation of panentheism in the first part of the System of Philosophy, the so-called analytical part: Krause (1828): 255 ff.

life of union with God is not a mere fusion or ontological dependence, but constitutes a plural and grandiose act of love, both of all beings towards God, and primarily of God towards all beings.

Krause saw the ideal of love and universal union already developed in historical religions themselves, especially in Christianity, which he does not hesitate to qualify as the “Religion of love” (Krause 1811: 115). It is in this sense that the idea of a science and philosophy of religion, open also to the study of the history of religions and to the philosophical understanding of that same history, makes full sense in Krause’s approach to the system of sciences.

## II. THE KRAUSIAN PROGRAM OF A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Although Krause summarily expounded his idea of the “Science of Religion” in the already mentioned *Lectures on Fundamental Truths*, and in the *Lectures on the System of Philosophy*, he provided an elucidation of the ultimate metaphysical foundation of the notion of the religious, Krause had already determined the “Fundamental Tasks of Knowledge” in a short article published in 1823 in the journal *Isis von Oken* in order to approach the aspiration of religion in every epoch (Krause 1823). Prof. E. M Ureña had the good sense to include this article in his selection of texts in volume III of the current edition of Krause’s selected writings (Krause 2014: 3–11)<sup>13</sup>. It can be said that he clearly outlines there the steps and aims of what would be his programmatic conception of a Science of religion, including metaphysical aspects, but also historical, experiential or vital and practical. As for other sciences and parts of his system, Krause understands that one has to start from the clarification of the absolute idea of what is addressed, in this case: “The eternal idea and ideal of religion and of the social exposition of religious life” (*Ibid.*: 3 ff), in its meanings and fundamental options, to open up then the second task that would address “the purely objective and historical knowledge of the development of religion, religiousness and the historical experience (*Darlegung*) of the former” (*Ibid.*: 6 ff). From both lines a third task would arise that would consist in a philosophical-historical understanding that would allow us an evaluation and comparison of the different religions starting from a

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13 I will quote from this edition.

solid knowledge of them (*Ibid.*: 8 ff). Only from this gradual process will it be possible to value in a fair measure the aspiration and search for God on the part of Humankind in its different epochs and cultures. But to this triple articulation, frequent in the approach of Krause's philosophy (idea and ideal, historical knowledge, contrast of the idea and ideal with its historical realization), our thinker adds a fourth task, which actually culminates the previous ones. Namely: to put forward a proposal for "an eternal and positive System of religion and religious life" for the present and the future of Humanity. This system of religion will have to be "stable and, at the same time, it has to be possible to go on with its development according to the laws of the continuous development of the life of Humanity and its vital relations in God and towards God, and at the same time according to the laws of the progressive development of science and art" (*Ibid.*: 9). Krause regrets that all too often the philosopher and scholar of religions cannot detach himself from his own beliefs, from "the social-positive" in which he was born. In this he is blunt, going so far as to state that he "knows of no exception" to this to date, and believes that all scholars of religion fall one way or another into these prejudices. With this, Krause does not intend a sort of cold and uncompromising dissection of the variety of religious forms. On the contrary, he intends to delve into the various societies and religions in order to see and learn from them what they have of noble and profound human aspiration, and to be able to contemplate them without the many "fundamental errors", "adulterations" and "outdated passions" that every religion carries with it in its historical development (respectively *Ibid.*: 4, 3).

These four points, although stated in a synthetic way, actually pose an ambitious program that perhaps, only in view of the subsequent development of the anthropological, symbolic and historical study of religions that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, could be proposed today, and in this sense even with some difficulty. The first three tasks would be fundamental presuppositions for approaching that fourth one, which would not only propose a comparative and objective knowledge of the religious fact, but also a practical and systematic assumption of the religious dimension in its insertion with other spheres of culture, such as science and art. Does Krause speak of a universal religion for all Humankind? Undoubtedly, the idea outlined in his practical writings of a League around this intimacy with God, that we can translate as a League for religion, points to this ideal. An ideal that, as

we see, requires first of all a philosophical, but also a historical, philosophical-historical and finally a systematic-practical deepening. The path towards this ideal was not interpreted in the ranks of Krausism as a sort of natural religion of Humankind apart from all positivity in religion, although neither as a way back to confessionism or to any religious dogmatism.

As we saw earlier, it could be said that Krause made his fundamental contribution, above all, in order to undertake the first task outlined in his *Isis* article. Namely: the philosophical and metaphysical elucidation of the idea of religion and the religious. Already in *The Ideal of Humanity*, starting from a practical and anthropological key, and also in a systematic way in his *Lectures on the System of Philosophy* (1828) and *On the Fundamental Truths of Science* (1829), an investigation on the idea of religion is developed in close relation to the same idea of panentheism and that transcendent God to whom the world is immanent, and who possesses a life and a personality of his own, a fundamental and absolute capacity for love and relationship. In the aforementioned article we are given a summary of three fundamental positions regarding the concept of religion, which affect the very notion of God in his relationship with the world. We reproduce this passage for its clarity and brevity:

(...) some philosophers of religion place God simply as outside and above the world and Humanity. Others on the contrary equate the world and Humanity with God; others instead finally recognize God as Being (as Being in the supreme and unconditioned sense), and affirm that God as a total being and supreme being is indeed outside and above the world and Humanity, but also through it (durch sich), in itself and for itself. (Krause 2014: 5).

The third option, which alludes to his own panentheistic position, thus preserves the first position of a deism that separates God from the world, starting from transcendence, but qualifies a relationship of immanence of the latter in the former, which in turn preserves the transcendence of God with respect to the world, as we have explained in the previous section. The philosophy of religion thus definitively embraces in its first and fundamental task the very clarification of Krausian metaphysics at its neuralgic core.

That the philosophy of religion was a matter of interest and a matter on which Krause worked profusely in his last years in Göttingen is attested, besides his evaluation of religion and its metaphysical notion within the synthetic part of his system, also by the extensive works on this subject that he

left unpublished and that were, on the other hand, some of the first works published posthumously by his disciples, specifically Leonhardi. Were these extensive works that “Eternal and positive system of religion and religious life” (Ibid.: 9)? In spite of their breadth, we believe that these two volumes (the second one was published in two books) develop above all the first task, already well exposed in a short way in other works, but which is now unfolded in a dialogue and discussion with three important thinkers of the time: Jacobi, Bouterwek and Schleiermacher. This work was published under the title: *Absolute philosophy of religion in its relation to the theism of the faith of feeling and according to the mediation given by the finite mode between supernaturalism and rationalism* (Krause 1834)<sup>14</sup>. In the *Lectures on Fundamental Truths*, Krause already announced this work,<sup>15</sup> for which he even wrote the forewords.

Early in the the prologue to the first volume of this work, its author makes it clear that “the fundamental aim” of the work is meant “to show that the philosophical system of absolutism is philosophical theism itself”, and that in the face of authors like “Jacobi, Bouterwek and others”, “it is a fundamental error” to affirm that “absolutism is by its nature a pantheism and fatalism, and that it is even coincident in its results with atheism as such” (Krause 2014: 28). Along with this, the work is also concerned with proving that the science of religion cannot be based solely on sentiment and the faith arising from it (here the dialogue with Schleiermacher would be also included). Krause terms his philosophical position “absolutism” in this context, which can be thought of as being closer to Idealism in the manner of Schelling and Hegel<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to qualify as “theistic” that position

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14 The two books of the second volume appeared under the same title in 1843, with the first title somewhat abbreviated, which had already been published in the 1834 edition, and in which Jacobi is cited. In a second title of the work, this was included as the first volumes of the *Synthetic Philosophy*, i.e. the metaphysical part of the system of philosophy. Krause’s own prefaces to this work were published in K.C.F. Krause, *Ausgewählte Schriften III: Vermischte Schriften* (frommann-holzboog, 2014), 29–78, the first of which is dated October 1827.

15 Krause refers to a still unpublished paper of his entitled “The Philosophy of Religion in its Relation to Faith-Based Theism of Feeling, etc.”. He refers to it as “My System for the Science of Religion”: Krause (1829): 533, note \*.

16 The polemic against pantheism was already being waged by Jacobi at the end of the 18th century. We must not forget that Jacobi had a polemic with Schelling around 1812, accusing him of pantheism: cf. Guerrero Troncoso (2016).

which, while affirming the transcendence of God, does not cease to think of the intimate relations of the supreme Being with the world and Humankind, as Panentheism very articulately proposes.

Regarding the criticism of theism based on sentiment, especially in the evaluation of Schleiermacher's work, but also in the other authors mentioned, Krause does not censure the relevance of the sentiment pointed out by them, but the exclusivity with which they raise the issue of faith based on the affective dimension of the human being. Let us recall that Krause firmly defended the triadic structure of thought, feeling and will in order to understand both the human condition and to propose a relationship between man and God. Krause maintains, in the face of the criticism coming from Jacobi, that the metaphysical idea of God reached by the so-called absolutism is perfectly compatible with a personal and vital idea of God. Moreover, in Krausian synthetics or metaphysics, the idea of the life of God and his absolute attributes is a central topic in order to understand the essence of panentheism as a philosophical system.

But do these extensive studies of the philosophy of religion leave the other tasks of the science of religion unattended, namely the historical, philosophical-historical and critical treatment of religion in history and society as a whole? The dialogue with Schleiermacher's work analyzed by Krause — *The Christian Faith According to the Principles of the Evangelical Church* (Berlin 1821, 1822) — also opens up the subject of the philosophical as well as the historical interpretation of Christianity<sup>17</sup>, and we certainly find in his dialogue with the celebrated theologian many reflections which would abound in these other tasks, as necessary as the purely speculative enquiry into the idea of religion, but these important volumes of the *Philosophy of Religion* do not seem to develop in all its points that rich programme put forward by Krause in his 1823 article.

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17 This aspect is also clear in the review published by Krause in 1823 on the occasion of the publication of Schleiermacher's work, which also appeared in the journal *Isis von Oken*, Jena 1823, Heft V, Sp. 436–445. This paper has also been republished recently, completing, together with the aforementioned forewords and the other article in *Isis*, an essential presentation of the programme of Krause's philosophy of religion: Krause, *Ausgewählte Schriften III: Vermischte Schriften*, 13–28.



### III. THE KRAUSIST INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY

If we have now a look at the frequent treatment of religion in Krause's writings on Humanity, we shall find a well-known text that can be interpreted from these other tasks; especially the third and fourth, about a philosophical and critical reflection on religions in their historical specificity and a reflection from that perspective on the present and the future of religion in relation to the different spheres of the life of Humankind. I mean the extensive articles published in *Tagblatt des Menschheitlebens* (*Journal of the Life of Humankind*), published throughout 1811, which Sanz del Río would translate and present for the Spanish public as *The Ideal of Humanity for Life* (1860), and which would be the most influential work of Spanish Krausism. On the other hand, as Enrique M. Ureña has shown in detail, in Krause's extensive personal diaries, published almost entirely posthumously by his disciples, Krause's interest in religions in general can be very well reconstructed, as well as his assessment and criticism of the historical and present-day achievements of Christianity, both of Protestantism and Catholicism (Ureña 1992: 329–338).

In any case, in this influential text, Krause emphasizes that religion is important in human life, in all ages, and that every human being has the need to express and share his religiousness, which explains the external, positive and social aspect of the religious, and hence the rich and plural development of religions throughout history. Early in one of the central articles of the above-mentioned journal, we can read: "Religious souls, wherever they meet, sympathize with each other, share the happiness (*Seligkeit*) of founding a common higher religious life and of showing inner religion outwardly in words, deeds, science and art as a common work of art" (Krause 1811: 84).<sup>18</sup> As is the case, for example, with artistic expression, the religious man needs to express his "inner religion" outwardly in order to share it and communicate it to others. This kind of reflection would legitimize the historical existence of positive religions, and it is based on the same Krausian idea of religion. It is based, on the other hand, on his idea of human sociability and in general on the relationality of all beings (life of exchange, *Wechselleben*), which tend

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18 Also note the recent publication of this work according to the edition of the comparative texts, the German original and the translations by Julián Sanz del Río: Ureña, Fernández, and Seidel, *El «Ideal de la Humanidad» de Sanz del Río y su original alemán*.

to expression and cooperation through superior *persons*, i.e. associations and societies. From this point of view, the historical existence of religions, even if it can be criticised in its specificity and results, as the Thuringian philosopher did in fact, would not be relegated to being considered only as a merely empirical and historical element, to be replaced or overcome at a given moment by the Enlightenment and science. As we can see, right from the start, this expression and exposition of inner religion will not be merely a profession of faith in the usual sense, let alone an out-and-out defence of a dogma or creed, but will involve science and art, word and deed, all arising from the idea of social cooperation. This is why this “outer” religion, i.e. religion as historical specificity, is “as enduring as the human race” (Krause 1811: 84).

Krause very explicitly dissociates himself from that part of the enlightened and secular conception of religion as a preliminary stage of human formation, which would have been valid for its infantile and early stages, but it is in the end transitory and contingent and perhaps surmountable and eliminable in its maturity and through the very progress of the moral order of the world. On the contrary, in his view, man and mankind should never in their historical, cultural and social maturity be ashamed of religion, which is as valuable as science and art. Society and the human social dimension cannot and should never get rid of its religious dimension. And it is Jesus, he tells us, who succeeded in conveying the idea of religion as love and as something that appealed to and embraced man in his full humanity.

The relevance of religion and the commitment to its historical durability do not, however, prevent Krause’s approach from establishing a clear autonomy and independence of the various spheres of the human. Although the relationship with God, and therefore religiousness, is found in the most intimate part of human nature and at the source of all human knowledge, action and deeds, Krause points out that “this does not mean that morality, justice, wisdom and art need to be arranged especially as the purpose of religion” (Krause 1811: 99). Seen from this approach we can already understand not only the compatibility, but also the need among Krausists to separate religion from science or not to subdue the latter to the former, without religion and the religious dimension ceasing to be, however, a crucial aspect of their conception of man and their metaphysical approach.

As the articles in the *Diary of the Life of Humankind* (*Tagblatt*) move towards a somewhat more historical analysis of the ideals and forces that shape

human life, the assessment of Christianity in its essence as a “religion of love” that appeals for the first time to the “purely human” is strengthened. One of the few historical allusions we find in *The Ideal of Humanity* alludes precisely to Jesus as the “founder of the religion of love”: “The idea of Humanity that you, O divine founder of the religion of love!, launched as a spark of heavenly Wisdom in the reborn hearts, has today become a vibrant living flame, in whose light your eternal work will also be reborn, gaining new life and new power of sanctification” (Krause 2018: 36)<sup>19</sup>. The fact that it is in Europe that the universal idea of human dignity emerges is, for Krause, directly due to the influence and spread of the Christian religion; such a refined and universal idea of dignity was not achieved even by the Greeks, whom Krause does not hesitate to consider the most brilliant people of antiquity.

However, Krause believed that religion did not fulfil all human aspirations in his own time, and this was due to the fact that not all human dimensions and strengths have been shaped uniformly and completely. Krause’s criticism is thus of an educational and formative nature, and he believes that it is through the alliance of religion with science, art and morality in their various developments that a renewal of Christianity itself can be achieved and the true meaning of religiosity can be attained, which is none other than the union of all people with each other and with God (Krause 1811: 162 ff.).

The final section in the text of the *Diary of the Life of Humankind*, under the heading of “Intimacy with God and the League of Intimacy with God on Earth” (Krause 1811: 199 ff.)<sup>20</sup>, offers us a succinct review of the historical specificity of the different religions and a reflection and proposal for the author’s historical present and the times to come. Precisely under cover of the

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19 The sense of this statement fully coincides with the allusions we now refer to in the *Tagblatt* to Christianity as a religion of love. The value of this passage lies, on the one hand, in the almost non-existent historical allusions, or allusions to specific authors and doctrines which appear in the text of *Das Urbild der Menschheit*; on the other hand, the enthusiastic and direct tone of the text sums up well Krause’s hopes for the present and the future in relation to religion, and especially, to the doctrine of Jesus K.C.F. Krause, *Tagblatt des Menschheitens. Erster Jahrgang. Erstes Vierteljahr für die Monate Januar, Februar, März 1811 nebst einem literarischen Anzeiger* (Arnoldische Buchhandlung, 1811), 57 ff.

20 In this title the expression Intimacy with God is already used instead of the term “Religion”. Sanz del Río translates this title as “A Religion and Religious Society in Humankind”; or, in the 1851 manuscript: “A Unitarian Religion in Humanity and a Human Religious Society on Earth”, a title which is broken down into several subsections: Ureña, Fernández, and Seidel, *El «Ideal de la Humanidad» de Sanz del Río y su original alemán*, 196 ff.

affirmation of the ideal unity of a religion common to all men, given the unity of God and humanity, Krause requires an exposition of the historical development and the stages leading to this path of unity, not yet fully achieved in fact. As for the analysis of other spheres of humanity, history and the general laws of its evolution cannot be disregarded here.

Krause points out that at an earlier time, people already sensed the unity of God without yet considering the opposition of God to the world and to humanity itself. But as the various forces of the human being and of nature itself developed in him, man gradually forgot the unity and the very consciousness of his being, and became immersed and dispersed in the natural and external life. In this state man began to recognise God in things, in every living thing, and ended up worshipping everything living. In a moment of greater maturity, man will again recognize God as supreme and one being, creator and lord of all that exists. At a higher stage, recognizing that there is nothing beyond God, the true relationship of all that exists in Him and to Him will be revealed (Krause 1811: 200). In short, we recognize these stages, even if they are formulated abstractly, as the process of a primitive glimpse of God, which does make an issue of his relation to the finite, and which may later lead to polytheism or pantheism, which will then give way to a more conscious monotheism and to a maturation of this as panentheism. It is interesting to note that, in this process, in addition to factors of historical development, some attention is paid to the very evolution of the idea of God from the analysis of the use of faculties, for which Krause seems to attend to the division of faculties left by Kant: fantasy, understanding and reason. The first two in league will be the forgers of the first images of God, to gradually give way to the more constitutive participation of reason and above all to a harmonious penetration of the three. From that perspective, he explains that in the beginning man imagined and saw God in everything that was lively and beautiful.

Historically, Greek religion is valued for its polytheism, which is embedded in the very perfection of the human figure. Although the idea of the divine is still limited here, Greek religion gradually refined it from various human archetypes, in parallel with its deepening of the ideal of beauty through the essential contribution of fine arts. This progress is, however, limited to bodily beauty and not so much to moral beauty. As Krause illustratively explains, Greek men could cope much better with the flaws and even moral

baseness in his gods than with physical or bodily defects. Despite the fact that in the archetypes of the human in Greek and Roman polytheism there is also room for the monstrous and the inhuman, Krause did not fail to appreciate the superiority, not only aesthetic or poetic, but also in a religious sense, of Greek culture over other ancient religions, which deified animal or terrifying creatures<sup>21</sup>. However, the limits to Greek humanism can be seen in the fact that although they left memorable examples of their love of beauty, virtue and friendship, they limited humanity to citizenship and lived with slavery and the exclusion of foreigners, the (sacrificial) desecration of the body and the subjugation of women (Krause 1811: 201)<sup>22</sup>.

This same deepening and perfecting of the human will lead religious man to distinguish elements which, although they point to the divine, are not identified with it; thus the initial polytheism and the anthropomorphic vision of the gods will give way to a higher conception of God and religion. Thus the knowledge and the idea of a God who transcends humanity and the world was forged; a God who is both unitary and creator of everything that exists. This long process clearly crystallized in Hebrew and Judaic monotheism, and came to found the idea of one people on the belief in a single God beyond all earthly powers, although there were still pagan elements in this initial monotheism that conceived this God of the chosen people as hostile to outsiders and with a force that could be violent and destructive, more akin to a great military leader. In any case, Krause appreciates the profound and essential maturation of this initial monotheism towards a vision of God as creator, father and caretaker of all things, an idea of God as love which Jesus will finally reveal, giving way to a life in complete intimacy with God, that is, the religious dimension of man reaching its culmination.

Krause's appreciation for Christianity as a religion of love and as a progressive adjustment, in fact, of the profound conception of the relationship of God to the world and to man is not devoid of criticism and objections

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21 In the succinct reconstruction of the historical development of religions in the text we are now analyzing, we miss allusions to Eastern religions, a field Krause knew very well, especially Hinduism and the Vedas and the Upanishads (Oupnekhat), that he knew well (and we know that) from his diaries and also from his writings on languages, on the history of music and on the history of philosophy itself.

22 We can indirectly see in these criticisms Krause's advanced and still in full force social-ethical conceptions of exclusion, women and the body itself.

regarding its historical attainment and specificity, in which he does not fail to notice that the doctrine of Jesus could not develop in its purity and retained “pagan and Jewish” elements, i.e. it remained adulterated by visions not yet purified of the unity of God, of his transcendence, of his involvement with the world, and, above all, of his loving and intimate dimension with each of his creatures. It is this historical situation that explains the persistence of slavery and the subjugation of man by man among Christian peoples, as well as the self-inflicted sacrifices, “the contempt for nature, its beauty and its laws”, the persecution of dissenters and heresies, “inquisitorial trials”, genocides (“death of entire communities in the newly discovered America”), “wars of religion”, and the “inner tearing apart and weakening of the noblest peoples”... “all of these”, Krause points out, “are the horrendous effects of errors in the field of religion” (Krause 1811: 202)<sup>23</sup>.

However, in this succinct but forceful assessment of Christianity in history, Krause does not fail to recognise some very positive contributions, not only in terms of the theoretical or metaphysical conception of religion and God. We already know that the very idea of universal dignity, which was embraced by the Enlightenment itself, is referred by Krause in its genuine roots to the message of Jesus, and he also cites the abolition of slavery, the ideal of brotherhood among all peoples, and also the promotion and development of science and the arts, as well as the further development of the ideal of a comprehensive and uniform education of all human forces. These factors indicate an evaluation of Christianity which, on the one hand, possibly appreciates contributions from the origins of Christianity and the Middle Ages, while, on the other hand, also appreciates some others during the period we characterise as the Modern Age, from the Renaissance onwards. This historical specificity is not made explicit in these Krausian texts on Humanity, but it is present in others on the history of science and philosophy and on the philosophy of history.

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23 In his translation, Sanz del Río marks out this passage with great accuracy, adding tyranny, civil wars, and the martyrdom of bodies to the list of errors, and, together with genocides in America, he also cites those perpetrated in Asia, clarifying that these errors are due to an “imperfect knowledge of the unity of God and of the love of men in God, as taught by Jesus Christ”: Ureña, Fernández, and Seidel, *El «Ideal de la Humanidad» de Sanz del Río y su original alemán*, 210 f. These are, as can be seen, glosses or minimal additions in perfect coherence with the sense of the original text.

For Krause, the Christian vision and the idea of Jesus as the son of God anticipates the vision of humanity in God, and thus the panentheistic approach is compatible with the basic intuition of the Christian faith. Drawing attention to an illuminating private reflection from his diaries, dated 2 July 1816, E. M. Ureña reveals this intimate Krausian thought, which perhaps he did not publicize so explicitly during his lifetime: "In the worship of Jesus as God, however idolatrous it may seem, there is nevertheless a partial anticipation of the original Humanity-in-God (...) Therefore, whoever turns with a pure heart, in pure prayer of union with God, to Jesus as if he were God, and through Jesus to God, is understood by God himself in that imperfect anticipation, however imperfect it may be" (Krause 1890: 169, quoted in Ureña (1992): 332). Krause is not only valuing Christianity for its contribution to love and dignity, already mentioned, or rather, not only for the practical and moral aspects with which these notions had undoubtedly contributed and could still contribute to the historical development of humanity. The philosophical and theological depth of these concepts is rooted in the Christian conception of God and his relation to the world, as the passage quoted from the diaries reveals. In the systematic exposition of his philosophy, Krause will make explicit the affinity of the Christian approach with his panentheistic metaphysical conception: "The doctrine of the intuition of Being is coincident with the doctrine of Christianity; that the world is through God, that God reveals Himself in the world, that the human being is a finite image of God, and that we live in Him, move and exist" (Krause, 1828: 256). Krause alludes to the coincidence of these approaches with the Fathers of the Church and especially with Saint Augustine, and then clarifies that he does not point out this affinity either to prove or reinforce his arguments, or otherwise to make an apologetic of any creed, but in order to show, "that the assertion of the adversaries who say that the pure science of God leads away from the doctrine of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church, is unfounded". He clarifies that those who blame this separation between science and Christianity confuse "certain doctrines of modern Christian dogmatics, which have been received through philosophical systems, by which they simply presuppose that the Bible teaches that God is outside the world and the world outside God" (Krause, 1828: 257). This revealing passage shows us how precise is Krause's discussion and assessment of the different conceptions of God and his relation to the world in historical regions and especially in Christianity.

Krause's dialogue thus with patristics, with Saint Augustine and also with other medieval Christian philosophers, such as Scotus Erigena (*Ibid.*: 259), could undoubtedly be a very rewarding line to deepen his metaphysical conception and his philosophy of religion.

Krause is in any case very clear in making a possible confluence of ideas and approaches between his philosophy and the ideas and dogmas of religions, especially Christianity, compatible with his historical assessment of the specificity and historical realisation of religions. Throughout his diaries we can find very critical statements about religious dogmatism and the consequences of external, historical religions in their connivance with political power, but also, above all, a valuation of all religions as the germ, each one in its contributions and characteristics, of this progress towards the vision of Humankind in God. Christianity achieves a culmination here, both in the social aspect, ranging from the defence of fraternal and universal love among all men to the promotion of sciences, arts and all human faculties in their development and making. On the other hand, the idea of a League of Religion, understood as the intimacy and united life of mankind with God, culminates in the free relationship of religion with science, art and morality. On the basis of this mutual cooperation, Krause already sees it possible in his present day that, on the one hand, universal religion and religious society for the whole of mankind will be purified, and on the other hand, that science and world knowledge, as well as the expression of beauty and the deepening of virtue, will find their full maturity. The extensive articles on the ideal development of mankind in the *Diary of the Life of Humankind* end with these reflections. Since the relationship with science and art, as fundamental works of humanity, is essential, we want to highlight the final chapter of these texts, which deals with the relationship between religion and morality. In these reflections Krause gives a fundamental role to morality and virtue as the *inner condition* for all religion in its right development (Krause 1811: 206 f.). This approach might seem to lead Krause to that Enlightenment position which would see religion only as a pre-scientific antechamber to religion, but this is not the case at all. Krause analyses virtue precisely as the inner and free development of every human being in his discovery of universal love and his union with God. Therein lies the true meaning of religious freedom, not so much a freedom to embrace one religion or another, as if they were all comparable or relative, but a freedom and autonomy to develop the religious dimension



in all its depth. For it is within man as a moral being that God himself is revealed, and an initial community is found between human beings, all that exists and God himself. Thus virtue, together with the sense of truth and the love of beauty, would be like that eye that is fit for the light, which already has in itself something of that light, something luminous. Indeed, using a metaphor that Krause read in Plotinus' texts on beauty, Krause tells us: "Just as the bodily sun can only be grasped from the bodily eye, which the sun itself illuminates, and is made in the likeness of it, so God, the original source of all being and all life, only reveals himself to the man who has been developed in that similar original force". (Krause 1811: 205)<sup>24</sup>. Virtue in humanity is that pure eye which is able to freely assume the vision and union with God. This inner and proper revelation in each man, as the legitimate ambassador of Humankind, requires in any case a shared expression and a historical attainment in relation to the cognitive and artistic dimension and to the very making of Humankind as a whole.

Provided with a sense that is still very relevant, Krausists defended the need to know religions in their history and diversity, as well as the unpost-ponable encounter of religion with science and philosophy. Not to engage in a new duel, but to delve deeper into both fields and build a more humane and more harmonious society in relation with totality. More whole, if such an expression is possible, and more open to the congruence of knowledge, feeling and will. His proposal remains an episode in the revision of religion in contemporary thinking, a proposal with a singular identity and at the same time, I believe, very susceptible of being re-read and taken into account for a current revision of the phenomenon of religions in our convulsive present, both on an institutional and political level and, perhaps with priority and urgency, on the educational level, an aspect in which Krause always placed the origins and culmination of the true changes and lasting progress in the history of Humankind.

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24 Regarding the metaphor from Plotinus, not alluded to in this text, explaining that the eye would have something of *solar* to capture the sun, and thus, the spirit already has something of beauty to capture it, cf: Pinilla (2002): 582 ff. Krause quotes this Plotinian passage in his Aesthetics lectures, and the thinking involved is essential for the metaphysical foundation of beauty and the meeting of its subjective and objective aspects in his theory of beauty.

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