CHAPTER 3

The Structure of Dualism

Gnosis as Fundamental Dualism

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

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

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2 O'Regan disagrees with Baur because, while Böhme may have used the dualistic language of Manichaeism, his dualism is different from that of the Manichaeans. Thus, in Manichaeistic thought, the two opposing principles are ontologically different from one another, while in Böhme they seem to share the same ontological root or identity. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 230. Gibbons, on the other hand, is convinced that Böhme was not a Manichaean. See Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought*, 92.
3 It is important to understand here that man makes sense of himself by looking at God. See also Wartofsky, *Feuerbach*, 74.
Now seeing man knows that he is such a twofold man, in the capacity of good and evil, and that they are both his own, and that he himself is that only man which is both good and evil, and that he shall have the reward of either of them, and to which of them he inclines in this life, to that his soul goes when he dies (...).  

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

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

The fourth question poses the issue of man's origin, so Böhme asks whether the human being can really know where he comes from. At this point, he does not

6 In Böhme, man’s dualism is a mirror of God’s dualism. See also Turner, History of Philosophy, 392.
7 See also Hessayon, “Gold Tried in the Fire”, 288.
8 Böhme, Beschreibung der drei Principien göttlichen Wesens, Vorrede:13, and Baur, Die christliche Gnosis, 558.