

**THE WORSHIP OF GENIUS,  
AND THE DISTINCTIVE  
CHARACTER, OR ESSENCE  
OF CHRISTIANITY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649485536

The Worship of Genius, and The Distinctive Character, or Essence of Christianity by C. Ullmann

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**C. ULLMANN**

**THE WORSHIP OF GENIUS,  
AND THE DISTINCTIVE  
CHARACTER, OR ESSENCE  
OF CHRISTIANITY**



THE  
WORSHIP OF GENIUS,  
AND THE  
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER,  
OR  
ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.  
By PROF. C. ULLMANN.

Translated from the German,  
By LUCY SANFORD.



"The Worship of Genius has its truth and its justice as opposed to something lower, but is untrue and unjust as opposed to something higher: it is beautiful and praiseworthy as a natural enthusiasm for the highest manifestations of the human intellect; but reprehensible and destructive as a substitute for the worship of God, and for the true living Christian faith."—PAGE 3-6.

LONDON:  
CHAPMAN, BROTHERS, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

M. DCCC. XLVI.

THE  
WORSHIP OF GENIUS.

BY  
PROF. C. ULLMANN.

twenty  
39

## PREFACE.

---

To many who take up this work for the first time its title may appear to want unity, or be even wholly incomprehensible. A few words on the origin of the article may therefore vindicate the connexion and force of the prefix which has been chosen.

Dr. Strauss, in his article on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," which appeared in the *Freihafen Journal*, towards the end of the summer of 1838, had declared, that to our age of religious disorganization nothing was left but a *worship of genius*; that is, a reverence for those great spirits who form epochs in the progress of the human race, and in whom, taken collectively, the godlike manifests itself to us most fully; he had even included Christianity under this worship of genius, by assigning to its founder the first place among those men of genius who have promoted human progress. In the spring of 1839 was celebrated the inauguration of the statue of Schiller at Stuttgart; and my friend Schwab, as an orator, expressed, in language worthy of the subject, the national feelings of veneration for the immortal poet. Little as had been the cause given for the suspicion, either by the originators of the festival, or by the speaker, this act of homage to the memory of the poet was regarded as an act of religious worship, as an idolatry of genius. These words of Strauss, and this homage to genius, entering my mind one day at the same time, suggested the idea of a letter on the worship of genius, which I therefore addressed to the friend who had spoken beside the statue of Schiller.

The question was not now, whether he who first expressed in plain words the idea of a worship of genius, still remained firm in that opinion, or even considered it of importance; for our concern was not with an individual, but with a principle. It is well known, that before the appearance of the article on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," many intellectual persons of both sexes, either humble kindred or honoured chiefs of our high aristocracy of mind, knew and practised no other worship than that of genius; and that this religion, notwithstanding, or, perhaps, *owing to its setherial and unsubstantial character*, will retain its followers, even if he who coined the name for them should desert it. His words found a response in many quarters, for the very reason, that they gave a more definite expression to an already existing state of feeling, of which it thus promoted the progress. The affair, however, afforded me a welcome opportunity of pursuing yet further one branch of my remarks on Strauss's Christology.\*

I have added some Supplementary Remarks, forming an Appendix, upon those points which could not conveniently receive further elucidation in the letter.†

C. ULLMANN.

*Heidelberg, March, 28, 1840.*

\* The former essays with which the the present discussion is connected, are:—*Historisch oder Mythisch?—Beiträge zur Beantwortung der gegenwärtigen Lebensfrage in der Theologie.* Hamburg, bei Fr. Perthes, 1838; and particularly the *Seindschrieben an Strauss über the Persönlichkeit und Wunder Christi.* S. 89-180.

† Some portions of the Preface having reference only to Schwab and his contribution to the volume, as it appears in the German, have been omitted.



THE  
WORSHIP OF GENIUS.

[A LETTER TO GUSTAV. SCHWAR.]

---

How often, formerly, my dear friend,—when seated together after the labours of the day, with others of congenial spirit, in one of the most social rooms of that Tubingen institution, from which so much that is important, not in theology alone, has proceeded,—have we refreshed ourselves by the communication of whatever was stirring in heart and brain! Even in later days, the happiness of intercourse with you has often been granted me; and thus I have acquired the habit of living in intimate communion with you, and of imparting and discussing mentally even what we could not converse upon in person. But the inner language sometimes calls for outward expression; and you will therefore permit me, since communication by word of mouth is for the present denied us, to address myself to you this once before the public. The subject, too, is one of general interest, while many points prompt me to refer myself to you in particular. My mind has been for some time occupied by that which gives the title to these pages; which by a voice of much influence has been not merely proposed, but announced as already existing; the *worship of genius*. You know what has been said upon it by the celebrated author of the "Life of Jesus," in his article on

"The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," which has been separately printed, in connexion with the charming and characteristic description of our friend Kerner. "The only worship," he writes,—“we may lament or rejoice, but we cannot deny it,—the only worship left to the cultivated of this age from the religious disorganization of the last, is the worship of genius.” Plainly, and without circumlocution, this worship is designated as a new Paganism or Catholicism, which has come over Protestant Germany; since, as if one human manifestation of the Deity were not enough, men now require, after the Indian fashion, a succession of incarnations; the solitary majesty of Jesus is thus once more encircled with a halo of saints, “only that these are certainly not exactly the saints of the church; but, as in the private chapel of Alexander Severus, the statue of Orpheus stood beside those of Abraham and Christ, so the tendency of the present day is, to revere the Deity as manifested in all spirits which have exercised a vivifying and creative influence upon mankind.”

I need not tell you, dear friend,—we, and all of our contemporaries who are alive to the impressions of the present, have often felt it, sometimes with sorrow, sometimes with hope,—that our age is employed in the solution of a great riddle; it seeks for satisfaction in something new; and has at least not yet found true expression, appealing to universal consciousness, for that which may again unite, and permanently inspire, the minds of men. What, then, if the words “Worship of Genius” contained the solution of the problem? One is certainly, and with justice, prejudiced beforehand against a worship which is *invented*; and such modes of worship have always, as with the Theo-philanthropists and the St. Simonians, shown themselves, precisely *because* invented, rootless and ephemeral. But the worship of genius, say its followers, needs not to be formed; it has already formed itself; it is the only one which the great religious ruin has left to the cultivated; it is forced upon us by necessity, if we would not wholly close our minds

to what is above us. Yes; this worship, even if we are disposed to see in it, not the glowing dawn of a better age, but the mournful hues of the departed day, is already in existence among us; and you, my Stuttgart friends, I might continue, have celebrated its first great festival. Your homage to Schiller was the explicit national inauguration of this worship; and thou, dear friend, obeying the universal impulse of the times, and thus, without, perhaps, distinctly wishing or intending it, sympathizing with the author of the *Life of Jesus*, didst stand as a worthy priest below the statue of the immortal poet to whom these first-fruits were offered. The people of every class bore their part, forming the first free congregation of the new church; and ancient Suabia, the scene of so much that has been important to church and state, to science and poetry, has now become the cradle of this new faith. But how? Suabia, the better part of whose sons cling with such serious rational devotion to the faith received from their fathers; that Suabia, known before all countries of Protestant Germany for her adherence to Christianity and the church; can she thus suddenly have embraced the worship of genius, so infinitely differing from all which she has hitherto held holy? If we examine beyond appearances it can surely not be so. For had the question been asked of those present on the occasion, the great majority would certainly have protested against the idea of holding a festival of genius, with the design of making this service a substitute for their religion; and thou, my friend, wouldst have been the first to protest against such an interpretation—nay, thou didst so unasked; for at the conclusion of thy beautiful speech, worthy alike of the Christian preacher and the poet, it is not to genius that the highest honour is ascribed, but to Him from whom genius proceeds. But what would have been the ground of such a protest? Is it that what has been called the universally-received worship of genius, has in reality no truth and no significance? Yet it *has* a truth, which was at once the justification and the