

ECCE HOMO

"Mysteries of the kingdom of God, you are less inexpressible than the mysteries of the kingdom of men."

THE MAN OF DESIRE



Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin
1792

Chapter 1

When we pick up a few axioms in the field of the exact and natural sciences, we don't ask ourselves why they are true: we feel that they carry the answer with them.

Why do we feel this? It's only because of the relationship and the appropriateness between the correctness of these axioms and the spark of truth that shines in our conception of them. They are like two rays of the same torch, which seemed to be distant from one another, but which come together by their analogy; and which, by interpenetrating, make each other more appropriate by their warmth and their clarity.

Whether or not we then make use of the truths that these partial axioms have taught us may be important for our benefit, but not for the existence of those two radical elements that we have just come to know: the correctness of the axiom and the spark of our conception. Both show themselves as having in themselves a natural life which nothing can prevent from existing, and these two rays could separate again and produce no effect, and would nevertheless retain their individual essence and constitutive character. Thus, an educated surveyor may be profoundly asleep, but this will not prevent geometric truths from existing, and from having within him the knowledge and gift to make use of them when the occasion arises.

There is a murderous philosophy which will not adopt these principles, because it does not distinguish the essence of beings from the current manifestation of their various properties, and because, recognizing in things only results or modifications, and as soon as beings are no longer moving before its eyes, they are nothing to it and it boldly challenges their existence. We only wish to point this out to those who might not be aware of it, and to warn them that they will find in their being something to defend themselves against such objections. Let's move on.

When the human soul, either by the impetus it can give itself, or freely, is raised up to an intimate sense of the Universal Being Who embraces all, Who produces everything, ultimately to the feeling of that Unknown Being whom we call God, it seeks no more than in the discovery of partial axioms to realize this total truth which subjugates it, or of the lively pleasure it gives him; it feels that this Great Being or this great axiom is in Himself, and that there is an impossibility that He is not. In this divine contact it also feels the reality of its own thinking, immortal life. It no longer needs to question God or itself; and in the holy, deep affection it feels it says to itself with as much rapture as security: God and man are true beings who can know one another in the same light and love each other in the same way.

How does it sense the certainty of these immutable truths? By the same law which manifested the certainty of partial axioms to its conception: that is to say, it feels the unassailable existence of the

principle of its being and its own self, by the convenience and relationships which exist between them. For without this, the conviction of the existence of these two beings could neither arise nor become fixed in us, and if this divine fire did not meet with a powerful analogy in our soul, it would pass through us without leaving us any trace or feeling.

Whether or not according to the same law above we make the most of the treasures of truth which this divine contact leads us to discover, it is undoubtedly something that must have the greatest influence on our true satisfactions, but which has none at all on the existence of these same treasures, nor on that of that portion of ourselves which happens to be their receptacle. So, the deprivation of this sublime feeling in altered souls, and all the unreasoning which results from it, cannot destroy either the necessary and eternal Principle of Beings nor the divine analogy we all have with Him; for *He Who is*, an existing fact indeed, may well have been confirmed and supported by external signs or testimonies, but He cannot draw His reality from them since He precedes them, since He is independent of them and brings it with Him.

This trait of natural logic in classifying these testimonies in this way does not abolish their privileges; for, if *He Who is*, if a fact, may well not expect His reality to be proven by external signs and testimonies since He precedes them, it is no less true, in the temporal region where we are, that without their means and without their actions, this reality would not be manifested outside of itself, and that we can consider these external signs and testimonies as being the indicative deposition of the fact that they transmit to us, and the faithful expression of the kind of reality, or of the kind of idea, which is illustrated in them in order to make Himself known; and it is this poorly-developed law that has given rise to the philosophers' error in confusing the *medium* with the principle, the organ of manifestation with the source of that manifestation.

Now, as we feel that there is not a reality that does not seek to expand and fill its measure, we must more than presume that this immensity of objects which surround us has a vast and important purpose, namely: to serve to promulgate realities, each according to their kind and class, or if you will, to depose, to testify in favor of *He Who is*, or of some fact which has an interest in manifesting itself, as at the same time it must be useful to our thought to know this fact or this reality, and to our soul to approach them to increase our existence.

If we are familiar with the works already published concerning these subjects, we will recognize that both our spiritual and our physical beings have abilities related to this important goal. Indeed, our material organs transmit to our animal and sensual soul the impression of the forms and images of all the objects presented to them, as well as the sense of the various properties with which these objects are clothed. Our thinking soul then has the charge and power to analyze all these properties, to consider what is the purpose of the existence of all these various objects, when this purpose is unknown to it: that is to say, it has the right to seek in these objects is the idea of which they are the expression and the facts which they come to testify, or what the reality they have come to manifest is; and we must all confess that we are truly and completely satisfied only when our thought enjoys the knowledge of the purpose and the destiny of objects, as our sentient being enjoys the impressions it receives by

means of the various properties of these same objects. This is yet another reason to convince us that all objects are the expression of an idea; for how could they lead our mind to this satisfactory and luminous purpose if they were not themselves, as it were, descended from this region of light or the region of ideas?

Moreover, do not the most common customs among men enlighten us on this great truth, that all the objects that surround us are the expression of an idea. Do not all the inventions they apply daily to their needs, pleasures and comforts each bear the character of the idea to which they owe their birth? Isn't a book the sign of a man's plan to gather his thoughts into a single body? Isn't a chariot the sign of a man's plan to be transported quickly and without fatigue? Isn't a house the sign of a man's plan to procure for himself a comfortable life protected from the elements?

Let us believe, therefore, that Supreme Wisdom also has ideas and plans in His operations, just as we do in ours; let us even believe that, being more fruitful and intelligent than us, His works, if we did not know the spirit, would have the sublime advantage of procuring to our mind and our soul even greater satisfactions than they procure for our sight, by displaying before us the pomp of their external magnificence and the rich but regular variety of their forms. Let us believe at the same time that it would be fulfilling the purpose of this Supreme Wisdom to apply our being to the search for the plans He has, by thus multiplying before our eyes this immensity of various objects, because if it is true that all reality seeks to expand and manifest itself, and that it can only do so through its signs or witnesses, it would be facilitating and assisting this manifestation to carefully interrogate its witnesses and signs, and to gather their statements with even greater care.

But among all these signs and witnesses, what other than man could be more worthy of our attention and reveal to us the greatest realities? Who else would offer us more significant clues? Who else would let flow before us those innumerable rivers of fire which seem to issue forth alive from his mind and heart, and show him, so to speak, seated upon the throne of all worlds, to judge and govern them under the eye of the Invisible Sovereign, Who is the only Being whom man finds superior to him?

If all the other signs which make up the Universe are available to us, given their fragility and striking disparities, as so many passive and partial reflections of the spiritual and secondary powers of divinity, man, appearing to be placed under the aspect of Divinity Himself, announces himself as destined to reflect Him directly and, consequently, to make it known to us in His entirety; and we need no longer seek for what fact, what reality, he is called to be the depositor and the witness of in the presence of all beings, since we perceive in him the speaking expression of the Eternal Principle and the irrefutable analogy which links them to one another, and that among creatures, he is as the active sign of the total axiom, or the greatest manifestation that the Divine Inner Thought has allowed to pass out of Himself.

If man is the only being sent to be the universal witness of the universal truth, then let us gather these testimonies, let us not leave him that we have carefully questioned him and then confronted him with himself, in order to establish the different clarifications that we can receive from his various statements.