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Theological arguments of Hubert Hayer

Hubert Hayer, an eighteenth century French Catholic theologian, waged a theological battle against anti-religious sentiment of his times. He presented a massive, elaborate treatise proving that the soul is an incorporeal entity endowed with attributes and faculties that cannot be explained in purely materialist terms. In addition, he presented arguments showing the immortality of the soul. However, these arguments relied to a large extent on the attributes of God and so he also presented several proofs of the existence of God.

Key words: Hubert Hayer, the immateriality of the soul, the immortality of the soul, the existence of God.

Jean Nicolas Hubert Hayer (1708-1780), a French Catholic priest, was a member of the Order of Friars Minor Recollect, or simply the Order of Recollects. He taught theology and philosophy among the Recollects and was one of the strongest defenders of the Church in his time¹. One topic he extensively discussed was the infallibility of the church. He had an exchange of letters on the topic with David Renaud Boullier (1699-1759), a French émigré, a Calvinist pastor in London, Utrecht, and Amsterdam². Unbeknown to Hayer, Boullier published these letters with his comments. Hayer responded with a three-volume

¹ *Dictionnaire historique ou biographie universelle* (Paris: 1836), vol. 9, 197; F.X. de Feller, *Biographie universelle ou dictionnaire historique* (Paris: 1848), vol. 4, 330.

² *Le Pyrrhonisme de l'Église romaine, ou Lettres du R. H. B. D. R. A. P.* [Révérend Hayer bibliothécaire des Récollets à Paris] à Mr.** avec les réponses [de Boullier], Amsterdam: J.J. Jolly 1757.

work³ which received very high praise from several bishops and even from the pope Clement XIII⁴. A short version of this work followed⁵.

His largest work co-authored with a lawyer Jean Soret is a twenty-one-volume collection of polemics with atheistic, deistic, and Protestant authors and their works of the day⁶.

Except for spiritual and devotional books⁷, Hayer also addressed the two large theological issues, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Considering the emphasis placed on rationality by the opponents of religion of the day, Hayer, addressed the problem of the use of reason in theological manner as well.

³ H. Hayer, *La Règle de foi vengée des calomnies des protestans et spécialement de celles de M. Boullier, ministre calviniste d'Utrecht* (Paris: 1761).

⁴ See several letters from bishops included in Hubert Hayer, *L'Apostolicité du ministère de l'Église romaine* (Paris: 1765). One letter even says that all bishops of the Catholic world applaud the solidity of the principles against the Protestants shown in *Le Règle*, xvii.

⁵ H. Hayer, *L'Apostolicité*.

⁶ [Hubert Hayer, Jean Soret], *La Religion vengée, ou Réfutation des auteurs impies* (Paris: 1757), vols. 1-3, 1758, vols. 4-6, 1759, vols. 7-9, 1760, vols. 10-12, 1761, vols. 13-15, 1762, vol. 16-18, 1763, vols. 19-21. These volumes are really bounded pamphlets issued monthly. An advertisement of the *Spiritualité*, by one of the authors of *Religion vengée* in vol. 2, 367, points to the co-authorship of Hayer. The content: vol. 1: Bayle; vol. 2: Bayle, reason, and mysteries; suicide; vol. 3: Bayle, reason, and mysteries; vol. 4: various authors and Bayle on mysteries including the eucharist; vol. 5: tolerance, putative truths, princely authority; vol. 6: tolerance; Manicheism; atheism; Bayle, [Helvétius], *De l'Esprit*; vol. 7: [Helvétius], *De l'Esprit*; Voltaire; vol. 8: Voltaire, Marcus Aurelius, Julian the Apostate, Vanini; vol. 9: Voltaire; vol. 10: Voltaire; *L'Encyclopédie*; vol. 11: *L'Encyclopédie*; vol. 12: *L'Encyclopédie*; [Frédéric-Guillaume de La Broue], *L'Esprit de Jesus-Christ sur la tolérance* [1760]; vol. 13: [Diderot], *Pensées philosophiques*; vol. 14: [Diderot], *Pensées philosophiques*; [Shaftesbury, Diderot], *Principes de la Philosophie Morale ou essai sur le merit et la vertu*; [Simon Bigex], *Oracle des anciens fidèles*; [Diderot], *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*; vol. 15: [Diderot], *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*; [Diderot], *Lettre sur les aveugles*; Panage [François-Vincent Toussaint], *Moeurs*; vol. 16: Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des loix*; his *Lettres Persannes*; [Jean Baptiste de Mirabaud], *Le monde et son origine. De l'âme et de son immortalité*; de la Mettrie, *Oeuvres philosophiques*; vol. 17: De la Mettrie, *Oeuvres philosophiques*; [Étienne-Gabriel Morelly], *Le code de la nature*; [Benoît de Maillet], *Telliamed*; vol. 18: [Jean-Baptiste de Boyer d'Argens], *Lettres Juives*; *Lettres Caballistiques*; *Lettres Chinoises*; vol. 19: Rousseau, Émile; vol. 20: Rousseau, Émile; *Du contract social*; vol. 21: Rousseau, *Du contract social*.

⁷ H. Hayer, *Jésus consolateur dans les différentes afflictions de la vie* (Paris: 1767); seventh edition came out in 1882; *Pensées évangéliques, avec des prières pour le matin et le soir, pour la messe, la confession, la communion, et autres* (Paris: 1772); included can be here *L'Utilité temporelle de la religion chrétienne* (Paris: 1774), and *La Conformité à la volonté de Dieu* (Paris: 1777).

Faith and reason

Two lights direct human steps, reason and revelation, reason leading to revelation and revelation perfecting and ennobling reason (S 3.145)⁸. God, the Author of nature, speaks to people through the light of reason and, as the Author of grace, through the light of revelation and the proofs obtained by reason and revelation should be equally appreciated (149).

As to the exact nature of the relation between reason and faith, Hayer vacillated on the topic. He stated that faith illuminates the soul, not reason, since, instructed by faith, the soul knows more truths than without this instruction. Reason gives the soul only the light of intelligence and the soul does not know these truths through reason. Reason does not know these truths since it only can know truths it can conceive and mysteries are above its grasp (*conception*); they are incomprehensible by reason (R 3.208). And so, reason does not need faith to do what it can do. There are some revealed dogmas that touch upon the order of nature and appear to be based on reason. Reason can prove that the soul survives the death of the body, but for how long? The revelation speaks about the eternal existence of the soul, whereby, by the double light, the soul firmly believes in its immortality (209). Thus, faith does not illuminate reason, but reason also does not illuminate faith. There is also a talk about illuminated faith to distinguish it from simple faith. In that sense, faith can develop its own principles with the help of reason based on the truths of revelation (210-211), which is not the creation of truths but the generation of them by deriving them from other truths (307). What exactly is the difference between creation and generation in this context? It rather appears that reason does illuminate faith if the latter uses the former for extending and clarifying the scope of its truths.

Reason is a divine light and any religion that combats reason is false, dishonors humans, and sets God in contradiction to Himself. "Reason is an essential base of the true Religion" by proving the truth of religion, whereas religion illuminates reason⁹. Reason and revelation are two lights and they cannot be opposed to one another; rather, they support one another (R 5.20).

⁸ References are made to the following books by Hayer:

E – *L'Existence de Dieu* (Paris: 1769).

S – *La Spiritualité et l'immortalité de l'âme, avec le sentiment de l'antiquité tant sacrée que profane, par rapport à l'une et à l'autre* (Paris: 1757), vols. 1-3.

R – *La Religion vengée*.

⁹ H. Hayer, *L'Apostolicité*, 179-180.

Not entirely consistent about the mutual level of illumination, Hayer at least was clear about the nonbelligerent relation between reason and faith. Religion is not opposed to sane reason (R 2.136). Mysteries of religion are not opposed to reason (144). “Faith can never establish its empire on the ruins of Reason” (146). Reason and faith have their own domains and they do not want to encroach into one another’s sphere of influence. Reason should be followed in all that is accessible to people and being independent, it does not reject the authority of God (R 1.339). Reason also states that people should believe in incomprehensible things if they are based on the divine authority¹⁰.

The immateriality of the soul

The approach frequently favored in Hayer’s days to the problem of the soul was very close to or an outright materialism, “a system which has delirium as its principle and all passions for its support is proper only for the society of monsters and of public pests” (S 1.xix). Since, in Hayer’s assessment, “materialism is a tissue of revolting absurdities which are favored only with the help of unintelligible galimatias” (xvi), he wanted to bring some order to the issue. In his view, the immateriality of the soul was often presented in an abstract fashion (xvi). For example, Augustine gave a great presentation of the soul, but it was insufficient (xvii).

Hayer accepted as obvious the principles that an effect is not more perfect than its cause, and that there is no effect without a cause; he also accepted a common notion that the sensitive faculty is a perfection surpassing any perfection of a machine (S 1.4). If matter could sense/feel, all matter could sense (6). Matter has extension; feelings don’t: they have no length, no form; feelings are modalities, i.e., ways of existence of the substance they modify and are present in all of this substance. Matter is infinitely divisible and none of its parts has feeling (10). If each of these parts could feel, the combined feeling of the infinity of parts would be infinite; thus, the soul, if it were material, would have an infinite feeling (11-12). The argument is not altogether correct: in the same way it could be argued that if each part has some size, then the size of the combination of such parts would be infinite; Zeno’s bipartite argument could be used to see that this does not have to be the case.

It is claimed that parts in separation do not have feeling, but only in combination (S 1.12). But how could these parts give to the whole what

¹⁰ H. Hayer, *L’Utilité temporelle*, 218; cf. R 8.17-18.

they don't have? (13), asked Hayer. However, chemical compounds do have properties which their parts don't have, which alchemists and chemists of the day knew well.

Seeing and tasting are mechanical processes, but when I see light, I don't see my eye, the seeing itself is not in this mechanism (S 1.18). The mechanism of vision and seeing are not connected by necessity; one can exist without another (19). If matter can sense, why does not all matter sense (23)?

No effect is more perfect than its cause, so, sensation cannot be caused by matter. Also, cause and effect should be of the same proportion, type, and order. Each material cause causes only material effects (S 1.31). There must be some relation between cause and effect (31); thus, it is ridiculous to think that a sensation would be the result of some combination of shapes and of motion along the straight line and along a curve (35). Consider the sensation of hearing pleasant music: there are vibrations of air, the membrane in the ear is struck and I hear a sound; there are connections between the events and matter and the sensation, but I am looking for the efficient cause (36). How are mechanical events resulting in a sensation (37)? Sensations are the result of an incorporeal substance; is it God? the soul? But often there are sensations the soul experiences in spite of itself, unpleasant ones (38). Some Christian philosophers attributed sensations to organs, but this was not quite correct (42). A modality cannot be attributed to a subject without grasping its relation which determined this attribution (45). If the soul were made from atoms, each image would be repeated in each atom. If each atom (at least, each atom related to vision (*atome visif*)) sees only a portion of an object, how would the entire image be created? (48, 50). People simply confuse an organ with sensation (52). The human body is as much devoid of sensation as a cadaver. Plato said that the soul sees, not the body (55), and so did Aristotle, Cicero (eyes are the window of the soul) (56), Lactantius, Augustine (57), and John Damascene (58). It is worth mentioning that the problem of *qualia* is still debated today and remains largely unresolved.

When a child begins to sense his existence, he has two primal ideas: the idea of his existence and the idea of the certainty that he does exist (S 1.64). "No one teaches someone else that *what exists, exists*"; such knowledge comes from the voice of nature. This voice is perfected by reflection and experience (67). Sensation signifies only a sensory (*sensible*) idea: colors, smells, sounds, etc. (74). It is interesting to read that Hayer is berating the peripatetic and scholastic epistemological principle stating that there is nothing in the intellect which was not

before in senses, because it degrades humans by limiting them to sensations only and removes intelligence.¹¹

Sensory qualities are spiritual modifications residing in the soul, not in objects (S 2.77). A sensory object is an occasion to remind a person of an idea of an intelligible object in which all imperfections are absent. Seeing an imperfect circle reminds one of a perfect circle, the essence of the circle (S 1.77). Proportion pleasantly affects the sense and imagination, but neither sense nor imagination can say what proportion is or what is the relation of proportion with pleasure it causes. The sense can perceive and imagination can represent similar things, but they cannot say what is similarity. Thus, senses and imagination would be insufficient to create art; intelligence is also needed (81-82). Moreover, only intelligence can grasp the concept of a number and all truths that result from combinations of numbers (83).

An idea is a perception of the essence of an entity. Matter being imperfect cannot produce ideas (S 1.114), the most perfect kind of cognition. Matter is perfect inactivity, an absolute inertia. Changes in it are caused by outside causes, so, how could such matter generate ideas and reason? Operations of the soul are not caused by matter (115). Ideas are not generated by motion since motion produces only motion – but also, possibly, the change of form, the change of temperature, etc. – or, rather, a body communicates motion to another body, the production of motion being above the forces of motion (116). Ideas are of an infinite variety that can succeed one another in an instant, too suddenly to be caused by physical motion (118). Locke denied the possibility that motion of matter can generate thought and cognition (119). Matter is not a subject of ideas since ideas would have extension and form and ideas, i.e., perceptions of essences of things, would be in matter, i.e., they would be images with their upper, lower etc. parts. Also, I can grasp very well spiritual objects through ideas: virtue, truth, God; for such ideas, I consult reason, not senses or imagination (120-121). If the idea of God is not spiritual/mental, it consists of some fixed mechanism (123). Where is it? and why, for instance, various names for God in various languages invoke the same idea and the word “God” is just a sound for those who know no English (124)?

Senses are limited to sensory objects, and imagination deals only with objects with some form; senses perceive; imagination represents. It is reason that judges, examines, and makes decisions (S 1.132). If

¹¹ Rather uncharitably, Hayer stated that the Scholastics often used incorrect concepts, mysterious language, and obscurities and that they explained immateriality in barbaric terms (S 2.297).

I consult only my senses, the sun is a small circle. Reasoning based on laws of optics, astronomical operations, etc. (133) says otherwise. The decision is made by reason, a spiritual entity (134).

Memory is reduced to impressions on the brain, traces of ideas – and thus not ideas themselves – which the soul discovers; but that is an admission that there is a substance different from these traces and from the brain (139). The neighboring traces supposedly invoke the ideas they represent (140), but that would mean that ideas with traces far apart can only be connected through the sequence of intermediaries as if the idea of Paris could not be immediately associated with the idea of Rome after the voyage since the ideas of cities passed along the way were imprinted in the succession dictated by the voyage and the long chain of these cities would have to be invoked in between (141). How about associating the idea of Paris with the idea of any other city whose traces on the brain could be far apart (142)?

The faculty of judgment proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.147). What would be a mechanistic explanation of the judgment of the beauty of a poem (152)? Also, to judge, “A is B,” the ideas of A and B would have to be in some material parts, the action of judging in some part C, so, how could this part C arrive at the connection between parts A and B? A materialist would say that judgment is the impact of two material parts, which is “such an obvious folly that it deserves only our compassion” (154). Generally, reasoning proves the immateriality of the soul (167) since it does not operate on words, which are just sounds, but on ideas (174).

Doubt proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.161), since, if the motion of matter should determine elements of knowledge (164), then what would be the difference between motions determining doubt and certainty (163)? I cannot be at the same time in doubt and in the state of certainty, but one material part could be in doubt, and another could be certain. What would be the physical mechanism of the change from doubt to certainty (164)? I am in doubt about many things but certain about some aspects of these things. How can two mechanisms in the same part of matter accomplish this in man-machine (165)?

Attention and distraction prove the immateriality of the soul (S 1.176), since motion requires continuity; thus, how can motion explain an ability to change attention from one object to one completely opposed to the first? (178).

Dreams prove the immateriality of the soul (S 1.180): the soul in dream reasons, desires (181), loves, which are hardly operations of a mechanical nature. Images of impossible and nonexistent objects

are created (182). Images and emotions in dream change very quickly and they are often opposed to one another (184); what material mechanisms can account for this (185)? Sometimes reasoning is even better in a dream than in the waking state, which even materialists recognize (188), and even some discoveries are made in a dream (190), which means that the soul in sleep is less affected by the body (193).

The will proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.202), since the soul acts by and of itself, whereas matter is inert (203). The soul's action of willing and loving are in the soul itself; actions of matter are outside of matter (204). The act of willing occupies the entire soul; thus, the soul is not a compound substance, since in a compound soul each part could will different things. How would it be possible to assure a necessary agreement of such partial wills (206)? Moreover, the swiftness of the change of will shows that mechanical movements cannot cause them (209).

Freedom proves the immateriality of the soul. I have an inner conviction of my freedom (S 1.211), whereas mechanical laws don't change (214). There are desires of the body and of the soul, sometimes opposed to one another. In a machine, there would be a perfect harmony between the two (217). The soul rules over the body according to its freedom; the influence of the body on the soul is not proportional to the former; the body is basically inactive and insensitive; it does not command (227). A mechanical cause such as the temperature of the blood can cause in one person a rush reaction, but in another person it will not lead to an outburst, so the soul is not a machine (235) and it can counter the mechanism of the body thereby showing the soul's freedom (238).

Desires, hope, and fear prove the immateriality of the soul (S 1.243). A material desire would be some motion and would have some shape (244). A person desires without any mechanical impression. Some idea suffices (245). A desire of an impossible object should be impossible (247). Hope is a longstanding feeling often with no prospect of fulfillment. "Is this conduct (*marche*) of the soul the conduct of a machine? This state that everyone feels and that no one can define, what relation, what resemblance does it have to parts of matter which move in a thousand different ways, without aim and without destination?" (251)

The love of pleasure proves the immateriality of the soul. It would be foolish to measure pleasures in inches or consider them round or square (S 1.261). All pleasures are spiritual even those that originate in senses (262). Pleasures that stem from wisdom and virtue are superior to sensory pleasures, more perfect than the body and are separable

from it; they are pleasures of the substance superior to matter (268). These pleasure “never taste better than when elevating myself above the body I impose silence on sensations and passions, when I force myself to act as though I had no body and as though I were absolutely independent of all bodies that surrounds me” (269).

Heroism proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.309), because just one word, one act may suffice to undertake a heroic task, which is out of proportion between the cause and the effect (314).

Envy proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.322). The same success produces in one person joy, in another sadness and jealousy; how can it be explained mechanically? In some, the prosperity of others and also their adversity cause sadness. How (327)? Cicero said that philosophy is a medicine of the soul (329). “If philosophical maxims could mechanically inspire the temperance in Socrates and Polemon, they could also mechanically destroy the odious passion of envy in the soul of any possible Mutius [a Roman citizen famous for his envy (327)]” (330).

Hypocrisy proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.333): a hypocrite is not a machine because of his constant experience of the exterior hiding the interior, one being opposed to another, e.g., hidden impiety and the appearance of piety. What would be a mechanical cause of such a contradiction (335)? If there are two mechanisms, how come they are in agreement in the impious and in opposition to one another in the hypocrite (336)? A hypocrite is not a machine, he is even superior to it since he can “make it bend to his views to follow his steps.” On that note, the voice of conscience proves the immateriality of the soul (340). Regrets, sometime reawakened, oppress a person, but they are more and more distant from the object that caused them and thus should become weaker and weaker, and yet they don’t, so, they are not caused mechanically (347).

The union of the soul and the body proves the immateriality of the soul (S 1.371). The command of the spirit over the body proves it. This command can be even tyrannical when the body becomes a victim of passions (375). One word can lead to the action of the body (376). Philosophically, the battle of the body against the spirit is really the battle of the spirit against itself: the battle of the sensory faculty against the intellectual faculty (379). Although the body and the soul form a union in this life, the nature of the cooperation of the two lies beyond human ken; it “is a mystery of nature whose impenetrable profundity prepares me to respect and believe the mysteries of Religion without being willing to probe them” (S 2.162).

The immortality of the soul

This long array of arguments given by Hayer shows that the soul is an incorporeal substance, that is, it has no parts, thus, it is indestructible (S 3.3), although its existence depends on God (4). The immortality of the soul is guaranteed by God's attributes (6). Could God create the soul, this noble substance, only to animate such a vile entity as the body? This union is the soul's first destination, but not its ultimate end since the union with the body does not correspond to the dignity of the soul, it rather degrades it (21). It is impossible to imagine that the soul could be annihilated after the life almost always filled with afflictions and misery. God created humans for His glory; how would the annihilation of the soul, which can glorify God, contribute to this glory (30)? Also the soul's homage paid to God on earth is so weak that another life is needed for them to contribute to His glory (24).

The desire of knowing the truth proves immortality (S 3.62). Human knowledge is imperfect, and many things are inaccessible to humans (63). All truths are, in a way, emanations of the eternal Truth. After this life, the eternal Truth will show itself to people without a veil (65).

The love of glory and the desire of immortality are proofs of immortality (S 3.66). The superior cause imprinted this desire in humans (67), God who put in the heart desires that lead to Him. To participate in God's immortality people should imitate God's perfections (68).

The desire of perfect happiness is a proof of immortality (S 3.72), also, the testimony of conscience (77). The voice of conscience is regarded as the voice of God, a testimony announcing that God will be our judge who metes out rewards and punishments (80). Humans have been always the same as to their nature. They always believed in the respectability of virtue (138), they believed that virtue should be rewarded and injustice should be punished. From this it was concluded that the future life exists (139). Also, God punishes vices and rewards virtues, which is an immutable law of God and this immutability guarantees immortality for this law to take effect (26-27). Moreover, God is holy and thus happy and reason tells us that observing the laws that lead to God's happiness should also lead to our happiness, and the eternal observation of these laws will lead to eternal happiness. God, who is goodness itself, cannot annihilate people who devoted their lives to Him (37).

The body is often in the way of the progress of the soul, so the Providence prepared for humans a blessing superior to the terrestrial objects where they can reach a destination worthy of them, where they can ennoble their reason by new gifts of God that have only God as

their object. The present life is the life of enjoyment of sensory objects and the life of trial (S 3.111-112). The advantages that animals have over humans on earth indicate that humans are destined to higher blessings (113). Animals have better senses, they are more agile, stronger, they live longer (116), they don't worry about the future, do not ponder on the past (118), they are not torn about the battle of their passions and the law (119).

Incidentally, the belief in and the desire for immortality has social and political consequences. People want to be governed by a sovereign who believes in the immortality of the soul; they consider him to be an image of God and an homage to him is an homage to God and disobedience of him is a rebellion against God. They can sacrifice themselves to the king if need be believing in the recompense in the afterlife (S 3.97). The immortality of the soul is "a truth essential to the happiness of society, as the only reason capable of serving as a brake on the passions which disturb public order, as a necessary encouragement to lead to heroism in the services that we owe to the Fatherland; from which it follows, it seems to me, evidently, that God, the author of society, gave to man an immortal soul" (107).

The existence of God

A major argument for the incorporeal nature of the soul and for its immortality is the nature of God and His attributes; in particular, God's goodness would not allow such a magnificent creation as the human soul endowed with rational faculty to go through a brief earthly life filled with suffering and misfortune to be annihilated. It appears that this had awakened Hayer's theological realization that the problem of the existence of God has to be directly addressed.

When people consult their reason, heart, the benefit of the human-kind, the heaven, the earth, the physical nature, the morality – all of them tell them that God exists (E xv). We know nothing perfectly, but, to prove the existence of God, it is enough to show that an eternal being exists, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful and free who conserves and governs the universe created out of nothing (3), a being existing of itself that is absolutely independent (9), unchangeable, thus immutable (10) by being unable to acquire or lose any perfection (11). The being that exists of itself is perfectly free (12). Eternally free, God eternally made decrees and He cannot change them since He is immutable. He created the world for His glory, but this creation was not necessary since God is sufficient for Himself (22). The being existing of itself is

infinitely perfect, since each imperfection is a degree of nonbeing (23). In a being existing of itself, all perfections are necessarily in harmony. This being should have all perfection compatible with the necessity of its existence; it is essential for this being to have all these perfections (28). God is all being, or He has the plenitude of being in the sense that He is the source of all other beings (32-33).

Being should not be multiplied beyond necessity, good sense says as much. One infinitely perfect being suffices. Multiplying one thing would indicate that this thing is limited. What purpose would be served by the existence of two infinitely wise beings (E 33)? Would their wisdom be the same? There would be two causes of the same thing, a contradiction. It would be absurd to say that two omnipotent beings caused one universe. One such being would be useless (34).

God is a substance that exists by itself (E 59). The being existing by itself is infinitely powerful (63). What would be the use of this being's infinite intelligence if its power did not match it? Omnipotence does not mean making contradictory things, such as a circular triangle (64). In fact, if God could make a triangular circle possible, He could make a circle impossible (S 2.106).

God is the author of natural laws. Some laws depend on His will, as sanctifying the seventh day; it could have been the first (R 10.194). Some laws are independent on God's omnipotence, since, in a way, they precede it in the sense that He could not legislate laws contrary to them (195). God could not make the just act of worshiping Him to be unjust. This does not limit His omnipotence which should not contradict His wisdom. God does not submit Himself to some eternal laws (196). God cannot oppose Himself (2 Tim. 2:13), that is, "He necessarily acts according to the views of his wisdom and there would not be any God if he could battle against his views. It is evident that this is not to submit God to Laws, but rather to erect/raise (*ériger*) his wisdom into an inviolable Law" (197), in which statement there is more than a touch of hair-splitting argumentation.

The being existing by itself can create (E 70). In nature, there is no effect similar to its cause (74). The being that exists by itself created matter (75) and organized it (97). In matter there is no connection between the present existence and the past and the future, so matter is not eternal; it does not exist by itself since all moments of an eternally existing being are inseparable from one another (76). The existence of God is an absolute necessity; everything else exists by hypothetical necessity (83).

These proofs are of a rational nature, in a way, proofs of existence of God from the concept of God belonging to the same category as the ontological proof. However, Hayer included a series of proofs of more experiential nature.

The existence of God is proven by the union of the soul and body: it is a mystery of nature how entities of such different natures are united (E 114). In fact, even today the exact nature of the interaction between mental life and the physical nature of the body is not exactly fathomed.

The proof of the existence of God from the preservation of the universe by maintaining the order established when creating it: what other connection would be between the present state and the past and the future (E 119)? Would accident be the cause of such a marvelous entity? Would it maintain the order in the universe? Only an infinitely powerful being assures that this orderliness persists (120).

The proof from an impossibility of bodies to self-move (E 121): experience tells us that the body at rest remains at rest; the body is in motion in proportion to the level of imprinted motion to the level of resistance (122); the cause of its motion has to come from the outside (123). For atheists, motion is an essential property of matter (128). Rather, the motive force in bodies is due to God (130).

Proof from the spectacle of the universe (E 131): this was the proof most prominently used in the eighteenth century, and Hayer mentioned two major promoters of physico-theology, Nieuwentijt and Derham (136). Calling this a proof from the spectacle of the universe seems to be a reference to Pluche's massive *Le spectacle de la nature* (1734-1750). The order that rules in various parts of the universe indicates the existence of an infinitely wise, powerful, and free Being (140, 201, 206), particularly "a constant order and an admirable order" (202). The detection of orderliness is so compelling that Hayer believed that an isolated individual who would not receive any education could conclude that the earth and the heaven are necessarily the work of a supreme Being (R 19.163). The Epicureans refer to the randomness of the motion of atoms which, given enough time, can arrange themselves into orderly entities. However, as Montaigne asked, why don't these atoms create a house today? Also, no one believes that an infinity of Greek letters would form the *Iliad* (E 89). Moreover, consider a watch which eventually will get out of order since its parts will become deficient because of the constant use (162). The machinery of the universe, however, works constantly the same way due to the arrangement made and maintained by the divine Artist and His wisdom (163).

Orderliness is intertwined with purposiveness; for instance, the sun was created to give humans light and warmth (E 142). God created for humans the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth that nourishes them.¹² Everything in nature has its purpose; however, because of the human limited knowledge not always can this purpose be obvious (144).

The proof from the faculties of the human soul (E 156), as proposed by Hayer is at best controversial. First, human knowledge is limited, each individual can know only a limited number of truths, and the human mind is dissatisfied with this limitation, from which Hayer jumps to the conclusion that there must be a Being who knows all truths (157).

Hayer believed that there is no causal relation between sensory organs and sensations perceived by the soul. The states of sensory organs are only occasions of sensations. God is the primary and efficient cause of sensations, not the soul, “and this is where Reason leads us” (E 160); needless to say that only the reason of the follower of occasionalism of Malebranche can be satisfied with this argument.

The existence of God is indicated by the ability of making choices (E 164): human freedom is “an incontestable fact” (165) about which convinces us “the intimate sense seconded by the sane reason”. People did not give this freedom to themselves; it comes from the force that is powerful enough to give it to them and also free itself since could God make people free not being free Himself (166)?

The proof from the natural law: there is an eternal and immutable law engraved in people that commands goodness and prohibits evil and turning away from evil and doing good is the first natural law and the base of other laws.¹³ The law is based on the divine wisdom rather than on the divine power. From this wisdom comes eternity and immutability of this law, but this power engraved this law in human hearts. This law allows people to see the difference between virtues and vices and even the worst villain can detect in his heart the presence of the silver rule: don't do to others what you don't want to be done to you (E 168, 183-184). The natural law “subsists in our hearts regardless of the effort we make in order to destroy it,” and thus, it can only be the work of the power of God (169). Natural law tells people that there is a supreme Being, infinitely wise, powerful, and good who governs the universe (204), to whom humans owe submission and who should be worshiped and loved (R 10.205). Natural law lets people hear its voice through conscience which torments people when they defy this

¹² H. Hayer, *Pensées évangéliques*, 48.

¹³ H. Hayer, *L'Utilité temporelle*, 9.

law by their misdeeds done in secret (175). The usefulness of natural law and the virtue it addresses is only meaningful when humans are free, since if there is no freedom, then there is no virtue or vice. This has eschatological consequences, since the existence of freedom and objectivity of virtue points to the existence of an infinitely wise Being who rules over the universe and who rewards virtue and punishes vice (172).

The proof from the Gospel history (E 176): consider only Christ's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and of His resurrection – if these facts are real, then God exists (177), and they have been proven as true (178). To a limited extent, Hayer used a frequently utilized proof not only of the existence of God, but also – and even more so – the truth of the Christian religion by reference to Biblical prophecies and miracles.

The proof of the existence of God from the ease with which this existence is accepted (E 180): if someone's attention is turned to the wonderful makeup of the universe, people can easily see that just as a work of art cannot exist without an artist, so the world can hardly be considered to be made by itself or by accident. This would lead directly to another, frequently used proof from the universal agreement (183): in each corner of the world on each level of the development of a particular society there has always been some religious belief in some power beyond the level of humankind (185). Even idolaters recognize the existence of the Divinity, but "they disfigure it in the most peculiar way" (193).

If there are so many proof of the existence of God, whence atheism? The number of atheists is small and they want to immortalize themselves by their teachings that are accepted by imbeciles or by people who gave themselves to pleasures and it is in "the drunkenness of pleasures when the Divinity disappears" (E 207). Importantly, pleasure is not forbidden; people need it; only excessive pleasures are condemned, because they can blind people and lead them to perdition.¹⁴

In all Hayer's undertakings, his main concern was of a pastoral nature: bringing people to the Christian faith since departure from this faith has catastrophic eternal consequences. Preaching itself was not enough in the age of a strong anti-religious movement that also affected believers. Hayer tried to use the opponent's stress on rational means to bolster religious claims. He used them to an appreciable extent in his expansive work on the immaterial nature of the soul and to much less impressively in his proofs of the existence of God. He listed some

¹⁴ H. Hayer, *Pensées évangéliques*, 14, 25.

fourteen of them, in many cases overlapping one another. In his view, it is all right to present new proofs of the existence of God without rejecting old proofs. One good proof should suffice, but because of differences between people, the same proof may not have the same convincing power (R 10.316). However, the old proofs did not always come out strongly. The need for the first cause is given in the context of the passivity of matter; no reference was made to the *first* cause to cut the prospect of an infinite causal chain. The ontological proof is altogether absent and the teleological proof made a rather weak appearance. The most strongly investigated proof of the day, physico-theological, is barely touched upon. However, the list of proofs Hayer did provide could speak to many readers, as various convincing power as they could have.

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