

Secondly, to set forth every doctrine as it appears in its connections with all others, and therefore to leave out of the system nothing which is required in order to bring this connection into view.

5. As Christianity stands at present, we cannot presuppose any general agreement as to what is or is not the essential in the religious affections of Christendom.

6. In order to determine in what the essence of Christian piety consists, we must go beyond Christianity and adopt a higher standpoint, so as to compare it with other varieties of faith.

7. Such a comparison presupposes that there is some common element in all faiths, in virtue of which we put them alongside of each other as kin; and that there is some peculiar element in each, in virtue of which we separate it from the others. But neither of these can be pointed to as a known and given quantity.

8. Piety in itself is neither a Knowing nor a Doing, but a disposition and modification of Feeling.

9. The common element in all religious affections, and thus the essence of piety, is this: the consciousness of our absolute dependence, i.e., the feeling of dependence on God.

34. All dogmatic propositions, in addition to their being descriptions of human states of mind, can also be set forth in two other forms: as conceptions of divine attributes, and as utterances regarding the constitution of the world; and these three forms have always subsisted alongside of each other in Dogmatics.

36. When in immediate self-consciousness we find ourselves to be absolutely dependent, there are therein combined our own finite being and the infinite being of God; and that dependence is, in general, the way in which alone these two can become one in us as self-consciousness or feeling.

37. This original feeling of dependence is not accidental, but is an essential element of human life, and does not even vary from person to person, but is identical in all developed consciousness.

38. The recognition that this feeling of dependence as an essential condition of life takes for us the place of all proofs of the existence of God; which proofs have no place in our procedure.

39. The original feeling of dependence, which at the same time involves a Supreme Being, only comes to actual consciousness, in the case of us who are Christians, along with the relation to Christ; but all Christian religious affections contain this feeling of dependence. Hence throughout the whole compass of Christianity piety the relation to God and the relation to Christ are inseparable.

40. The religious affection in which the antithesis is least prominent is that related to the consciousness that we are placed in a universal system of Nature.

41. In that religious affection in which the feeling of dependence relates to our being placed in the universal system of Nature, our self-consciousness at the same time represents the totality of all finite being (see 15).

42. The representation of such a self-consciousness according to the first form (see 34) will thus contain utterances concerning the relation of God to the world; according to the second form, doctrines concerning attributes of God which relate in general to the world; and according to the third form, doctrine concerning the constitution of the world as determined by its dependence on God.