

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a comparison of L. Feuerbach and E. Durkheim and their approach to religion. Specifically, it describes their books, “The Essence of Christianity”, and “Elementary Forms of Religious Life”. My aim is to discover topics across both authors who study religious systems agree in spite of differing theoretical background. Initially, both authors are analyzed separately, and later they are brought together in the converging section.

The main issues discussed in the converging part are the approach to the origins of god and faith, the approach to soul, and the approach to the interconnection of religion and society. This comparison shows that through completely different arguments the authors are able to come to an agreement about the influence of religion on an individual or a social group. Furthermore, it discusses the fusing of religious systems and society. Durkheim thinks this interconnectedness is functional and it may lead to cohesion of small social groups. Feuerbach argues that the redirection of faith from man to god can lead to alienation, yet still he agrees with Durkheim that it is an important social phenomenon that bounds together individuals and society.

Feuerbach represents philosophical investigation, while Durkheim’s approach is more sociological, resembling partly ethnographical approach. By comparing both of them we can see how closely connected they are. In the end, before establishing sociology as a social science, philosophy was investigating most topics nowadays related to sociology.