

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY AS THE CROSSROADS OF FAITH AND REASON:  
THE CONTRIBUTION OF FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR

by

MATTHEW THOMAS HOPPER

(Under the Direction of Wayne M. Coppins)

ABSTRACT

F.C. Baur was a professor of theology at the University of Tübingen in the nineteenth century. He has been identified by some as the father of modern Pauline studies, and by others as an arch-heretic and an atheist. Most agree that he was a scholar of great importance for the fields of theology and biblical studies, but there has been much disagreement as to what his significance is. A well-represented tradition says his value lies only in what his own mistakes can teach scholars today what not to do. It is my intention to provide a counter-argument to this tradition, and to elucidate what was the positive value of Baur's pioneering work in historical theology, as well as the uniqueness of his own contribution to the storied conflict of faith and reason following the Enlightenment.

INDEX WORDS: Ferdinand Christian Baur, Tübingen, New Testament, Church history, Historical theology, New Perspective on Paul

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most important figures in the storied clash of Christian faith and Enlightenment rationalism in nineteenth century Europe is Ferdinand Christian Baur of Tübingen (1792 – 1860) although his name is little known outside theological and biblical studies (and to some extent even inside them). Baur served as the director of the Tübingen University seminary (*das Stift*) as well as the first morning preacher (*erste Frühprediger*) in the seminary church (*die Stiftskirche*) from 1842 until his death, and yet was called the Anti-Christ and the Beast of Revelation 13 by Christians and Bible scholars in Berlin and elsewhere during his lifetime. Specifically, as a Lutheran Christian and professor of church history and New Testament Baur considered it his mission to elucidate the true essence of the Christian religion in differentiation from what he deemed the many confused, history-deprived versions of it that he knew so well. For his efforts he suffered harsh criticism not only from less ‘enlightened’ Christians who thought him a heretic and an atheist, but also from many of his academic colleagues who thought his work a disaster of honest history (if not also a shipwreck of Christian faith). This apparent contradiction and its polarizing effects have led to a great diversity of opinion about Baur up to the present time, though he is most often viewed by Christian theologians (even those who try equally as hard to emulate such an ambitious combination of scholarship with faith) as an apostate, with the corollary that he is only important to us today in what errors he can teach us *not* to make, lest we ourselves repeat his downfall from the Faith. My intention in all that follows will be to address this fundamental matter through a general survey of Baur’s life and work in order to achieve an informed evaluation of his unique contribution to biblical and theological studies, hoping also to attain a better judgment as to how this man, despite his many detractors, felt he could hold together the rigors of historical integrity and the obligations of sincere Christian faith.

The question of Baur is important to Christians and scholars alike, but especially so for Christians who would be scholars. On the one hand, Baur's bold approach to historical acumen addresses the challenge that so many Christian theologians (then and since) have also deemed legitimate. But while Baur obviously was not the only important Christian thinker to respond to the challenges of the Enlightenment, his role in the story is unique. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher has gotten exponentially more press, but he was not a historian, and in fact considered critical history a secondary even if necessary component of the whole enterprise (much like Albrecht Ritschl, who also overshadows Baur in the secondary literature). But Baur was a professional historian. It may very well be that Baur's marginalization in discussions of the clash of faith and reason in modernity is a result of the relatively under-appreciated role of history itself in the conflict. It is customary today to think of the Enlightenment in terms of the challenges posed to Christianity by the natural sciences and by extension, philosophy. Perhaps it is not recognized enough that critical history was the fundamental, underlying issue at stake all along. It never was a point of Christian dogma that the sun revolves around the earth, but heliocentric conceptions of the galaxy undermined the historical accuracy of the biblical *narrative*, the foundation of the Church and its theology,<sup>1</sup> which held mankind at the center of God's affections.

On the other hand, Baur's perseverance in Christian practice raises a possible challenge not only to those who would quickly label him an apostate, but also to those who fear (consciously or not) that critical scholarship will always prove detrimental to faith. Certainly Baur was not the first to conduct a critical historical reading of the Bible, nor even of the New Testament. Hermann Samuel Reimarus published his study of Jesus and the Gospels some decades before Baur's student David Friedrich Strauss shocked the world with his historical endeavor *Das Leben Jesu* in 1835,<sup>2</sup> also prior to most of Baur's

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<sup>1</sup> Certainly, Christian theologians viewed Christ himself as the foundation and cornerstone of the Church, but the Christ of Christian faith was nothing if not a historical person whom Christians must know via the biblical narrative(s). Hence the notable exception to my point here is the classic rhetoric in theological and biblical studies discussions that distinguishes a 'Jesus of history' from a 'Christ of faith.' But aside from that discussion, in general, the modern challenge of reason to faith is usually conceived in reference to a challenge from without, not within Christian circles.



important works. But Baur, unlike Reimarus and Strauss, represents one of the first truly critical historians of the New Testament and the Christian religion who not only borrowed insights from the leading secular historians and philosophers of his day, and so conducted some of the most scathingly critical studies of the New Testament, Christian origins, and the history of Christian dogma, but who nonetheless never believed he had betrayed or abandoned his faith and who continued in his Christian devotion until his death.

In Chapter 2 I will start with an introductory look at Baur's life and work as a scholar and a Christian. This will set the stage for further evaluation in Chapter 3 of both the value of his overall contribution to theological and biblical studies and as his relative success in the marriage of faith and reason, based on a survey of Baur's reception in subsequent scholarship. In particular I will focus on the treatments of Peter C. Hodgson and Horton Harris, whose works display respectively the two opposing positions taken by scholars with regard to these questions. I will also take up a new argument that he has earned a great deal more credit than recognized hitherto thanks to the arrival of what New Testament scholars call 'the New Perspective on Paul,' and that this should be given greater emphasis in the relevant discussions and allowed to positively impact the overall impression held by scholars concerning Baur. I will turn in Chapter 4 to the nuts and bolts of Baur's conceived project of 'historical theology,' focusing primarily on his express methodology with the intention of explaining its relation to the non-Christian historiography of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and its uniquely Christian agenda in the hands of Baur.

Ultimately, it will be my contention throughout that general opinion of Baur in the last 150 years has misunderstood the man due to a lack of familiarity with him and his work. I take exception to the suggestion of Horton Harris that Baur was a closet atheist who was both insincere in the words he preached from the pulpit and dreadfully mistaken in his historical method. I will argue instead that Baur

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<sup>2</sup> Reimarus's essay was published posthumously in 1778 by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Its full original title was: *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger*, Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbuttelschen Ungenannten (Braunschweig: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1778; ET: *Fragments*, ed. Charles H. Talbert [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970]). The full details of David Friedrich Strauss's study are: *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: C.F. Osiander, 1835; ET of the 4<sup>th</sup> ed.: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 3 vols., trans. George Eliot [London: Chapman Brothers, 1846]; reprinted in 1 vol., ed., Peter C. Hodgson [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972; London: SCM Press, 1973]).

was deeply committed to Jesus Christ and the Christian religion as the pinnacle of God's self-disclosure in time, even though he came to suspect some Christian traditions, and that he went about his work of critical biblical and theological studies inspired by a radical conviction that he was fulfilling a divine calling upon his life to challenge errant views of God's self-disclosure and carve out new and better ways of seeing God.

## CHAPTER 2

### BAUR-PARTY IN TÜBINGEN

But the devil did not slumber, and doubts were already arising among men of the truth of these miracles. And just then there appeared in the north of Germany a terrible new heresy... These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who remained faithful were all the more ardent in their faith. The tears of humanity rose up to him as before, awaited his coming, loved him, hoped for him, yearned to suffer and die for him as before.<sup>1</sup>

So goes the ‘preface’ to Ivan Karamazov’s short-story *The Grand Inquisitor* in Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s classic novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). The extent to which the stigma of heresy and doubt attached to Germany’s theological heritage can be traced is astounding. On the other hand, Albert Schweitzer, one of the most celebrated theologians and humanitarians of the modern era, began his most important work (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 1906) with a very different analysis of that heritage:

When, at some future day, our period of civilization shall lie, closed and completed, before the eyes of later generations, German theology will stand out as a great, a unique phenomenon in the mental and spiritual life of our time. For nowhere save in the German temperament can there be found in the same perfection the living complex of conditions and factors—of philosophic thought, critical acumen, historical insight, and religious feeling—without which no deep theology is possible.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps more surprising than the amazing contrast between these two opinions is the fact that they both likely owe a great deal to the effects of the life and work of the nineteenth century German theologian Ferdinand Christian Baur. Such an important figure as Baur in the story of German theology and biblical studies requires not only a detailed look at his body of work but also an intimate knowledge of the entire surrounding context of his life, including the German lands of his home and the political upheavals of his

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<sup>1</sup> Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dover Giant Thrift Editions; trans., Constance Garnett; New York, NY: Dover Publishers, Inc., 2005), 224.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1906; ET: *The Question of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans., W. Montgomery [New York, NY: Adam & Charles Black, 1910; reprint, 1948]), 1.

time. To that end I will frame the following biographical sketch with a survey of Baur's 'setting in life' (*Sitz im Leben*), from the dawn of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century to the Age of Revolution in the nineteenth. It will become clear in my discussion of his two most important works, the *Paulus* of 1845 and the *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche* of 1853, that Baur's life's work appears not merely as his vocation, but the product of his powerful conviction that in his study of the formation of Christianity he was doing the most important work in the entire world.

### *Sitz im Leben*

If it is indeed a curse to live in interesting times, Ferdinand Christian Baur may be likened to Cain on the day Abel's blood called out to Yahweh (Gen. 4:9-11). While his story may have no stupendous anecdotes akin to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's eyewitness of Napoleon on horseback during the Battle of Jena in 1806, and in fact his story takes place almost entirely in the Duchy of Württemberg, Baur was a contemporary and countryman of Hegel and therefore an equal heir of the newly acquired academic freedom won by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century,<sup>3</sup> largely by fellow German intellectuals.<sup>4</sup> Of course, at this time there was no 'German nation,' and the ink with which Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling wrote their now-famous riddle – 'Deutschland? aber wo liegt es? Ich weiss das Land nicht zu finden'<sup>5</sup> – was scarcely dry on the page.<sup>6</sup> So Hegel and Baur knew better than we the inherent dangers of generalizations about 'German intellectuals.'

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<sup>3</sup> The extent of that academic 'freedom' was, of course, quite limited by contemporary standards, and its limits will come up a few times in this study.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Aufklärung* is the German term that refers to what Mary Fulbrook (*A Concise History of Germany*, updated ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 72) calls 'the peculiarly German variant of the Enlightenment.'

<sup>5</sup> ET (mine): 'Germany? But where is it? I don't know how to find the country.'

<sup>6</sup> David Blackbourn (*History of Germany 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Blackwell Classic Histories of Europe [Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, xvi]) identifies 1797 as the year in which the line was penned. That year Hegel celebrated his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday and Baur his 5<sup>th</sup>. Blackbourn cites a very helpful article by James J. Sheehan, Emeritus Professor of Modern European History of Stanford University: 'What Is German History? Reflections on the Role of *Nation* in German History and Historiography,' in *The Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 1-23. The article is available through JSTOR at URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28198103%2953%3A1%3C1%3AWIGHRO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J>.

But both men were born and raised in the Duchy of Württemberg (Hegel in Stuttgart and Baur in Schmiden, three miles to its northeast),<sup>7</sup> both were educated in the same university (Tübingen), and both were native speakers of that dialect that Mark Twain would later call ‘the awful German language.’<sup>8</sup> However ambiguous a term, this ‘Deutschland’ was no more than a generation away, and the numerous German-speaking states of central Europe nevertheless shared a common heritage and culture that brought them together in many ways. In fact, it would be in the year 1841 (the year Baur turned 49) that August Heinrich Hoffman penned the infamous words ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,’<sup>9</sup> to be set to the tune Haydn wrote in 1797 for the Holy Roman (later Austrian) Emperor, Francis II (later Francis I; see below), which of course became the national anthem of Germany in the twentieth century, though it would not be until 1871 (eleven years after Baur’s death) that an official German Empire was created, with William I of Prussia named Emperor and Otto von Bismarck Chancellor.

So as tempting as it may be, knowing Baur was a nineteenth century German liberal theologian, to think of him alongside Ernst Troeltsch (b. 1865), Rudolf Otto (b. 1869), and other members of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, attending the latest opera by Wagner<sup>10</sup> and discussing the works of a young Nietzsche (b. 1844) (and perhaps those of the Englishman Charles Darwin) with members of the philosophical faculty,<sup>11</sup> Baur’s homeland was not the Germany of Bismarck. Baur predates these things

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<sup>7</sup> Baur’s family however moved to Blaubeuren, near Ulm and still in Württemberg, when his father took a pastorate there in the year 1800, where they remained for the rest of Baur’s adolescence and where he began his studies in the lower theological seminary.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Twain, ‘The Awful German Language,’ in his *A Tramp Abroad* (Hartford, CT: An American Publishing Co./ London: Chatto & Windus, 1880: 601-619.

<sup>9</sup> Of course, Hoffman’s poem never was the stereotypical, proto-Nazi pledge as which so many have unfortunately come to view it. At the time the thought of ‘Deutschland above all’ meant only that a unified German nation was the ideal, as compared to the numerous states and duchies that the German lands were at the time.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig in 1813. His opera *Der fliegende Holländer* premiered in 1843 and *Tannhäuser* in 1848. However, the four parts to his *Der Ring des Nibelungen* premiered in the years 1854, 1856, 1871, and 1874. *Tristan und Isolde* premiered in 1859.

<sup>11</sup> It is important to remember, however, that Nietzsche’s formal education (at the universities of Bonn and Leipzig) was not in philosophy, but philology. He was a trained classicist; hence his first work, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Leipzig: E.W. Fritsch, 1872; ET: *The Birth of Tragedy*). That he went on to produce monumental works of philosophy and ethics is indicative of the foresight of his Leipzig teacher, Friedrich Ritschl,

by several decades. In fact it will be precisely this fact that will later help illumine the terrific foresight and influence with which he must be credited.<sup>12</sup> In Baur's life Mozart and Beethoven were all the rage. Kant and Goethe were the most important thinkers to be read. This is not yet the Germany of the *Lederhosen* and the accordion, although they would make their appearance in Baur's middle-age. His Germany is that of the frockcoat and the innovative, new 'fortepiano.' Had he been born a little earlier, the picture we have of him at 32 years old might show him wearing a powdered wig.

As regards the quality of life and education in Baur's Germany, there is much to be said. Although Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published a year and two weeks prior to Baur's death on December 2, 1860, his colleagues in the natural sciences (*die Naturwissenschaften*) were not as privileged as later German physicists like Max Planck (b. 1858) and Albert Einstein (b. 1879). They were still years prior to the discovery of genetics (Brno, 1865, Gregor Mendel), the periodic table (St. Petersburg 1869, Dimitri Mendeleev), bacteriology (Paris 1881, Louis Pasteur), electromagnetic waves (Berlin 1888, Heinrich Hertz), and electron theory (Leiden 1895, Hendrik Lorentz). Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Central and Western Europe in the early and mid nineteenth century enjoyed technological progress by leaps and bounds. Among other things, Jethro Tull's agricultural machinery (Hungerford 1731) and Joseph Marie Jacquard's automated machinery (Lyons 1804) lent themselves to industrial revolutions across Europe and in North America. 'Between 1830 and 1880 Germany became a land of railways, gaslighted cities, newspapers, and universities.'<sup>13</sup> Other notable luxuries to appear were Alessandro

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who said in his recommendation letter to the University of Basel in Switzerland (which ultimately secured the position, even before Nietzsche completed his doctorate): 'I have not the least doubt that, if confronted by a practical demand with his great gifts he will work in other fields with the best of success. He will simply be able to do anything he wants to do.' (ET by Walter Kaufmann in his 'Introduction' to Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, Viking Portable Library, ed. and trans., Walter Kaufmann [New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976], 8.)

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2004; reprint: Perennial, 2005), 4. David Blackbourn (*History of Germany 1780-1918* [*supra* note 6], 135) furthermore states that 'a number of studies identify the 1840s as the period when a first industrial breakthrough occurred, spear-headed by the railways and supported by the growing Saxon textile industry.' However, he believes 'there is a strong case for regarding the following decades as the decisive period of economic development in Germany, whether we look at growth rates, capital formation, manufacturing output or technology. By the 1870s, Germany possessed an unmistakably capitalist market economy with a major industrial sector.'

Volta's electric battery (Bologna 1800), René Laennec's stethoscope (Paris 1816), George Stephenson's passenger railways (Stockton 1825), Thomas Telford's suspension bridge (Menai Straights 1825), Nicéphore Niépce's photography (Chalon-sur-Saône 1826), and Benôit Fourneyron's turbine (Paris 1827).<sup>14</sup>

Politically, the German lands of Baur's lifetime would undoubtedly surprise many unsuspecting non-historians. Steven Ozment complains that the German story is too often 'narrowly portrayed in modern historiography.'<sup>15</sup> For one thing, as I mentioned above, there was no such thing as 'Germany.' There were German lands and German peoples, but they were not a strongly united whole. Collectively they were still known at that point as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (*das Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*) and Francis II was on the throne. However, this proto-German-nation was anything but the militaristic, marching powerhouse of the second (and much the less the third) empire (*das Reich*).<sup>16</sup> The Holy Roman Empire had no substantive power in Europe since the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 (see more below). The German lands were in fact known as 'the land of poets and thinkers' (*das Land des Dichter und Denker*). It is unfortunate that 'the legacy of the 1930s and 1940s has proved impossible to shake' and that 'the history of Germany remains by and large that of Nazis and Jews.'<sup>17</sup> Indeed, 'there is popular opinion, even within Germany, which appears to believe that Germans have always been cryptofascists, if only the surface of their history is scratched deeply enough.'<sup>18</sup> But in his history of nineteenth century Germany, David Blackbourn provides this telling observation:

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<sup>14</sup> Technological luxuries to appear after Baur's death in December 1860 include Philipp Reis's telephone (Friedrichsdorf 1861), Nikolaus Otto's internal combustion engine (Köln 1876), Emile Berliner's microphone (Germany 1877), Carl von Linde's refrigerator (München 1877), and Werner von Siemens's electric locomotive (Berlin 1879).

<sup>15</sup> *A Mighty Fortress* (*supra* note 13), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Actually, the *Heiliges Römisches Reich* is not itself considered the 'first' *Reich* anyhow. That title belongs to the much earlier kingdom of Otto I (r. 936-973).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* During the writing of this thesis, I have found this claim proved again and again, as I have been asked to defend my study of German history and language numerous times. When I have explained that Germany has a rich heritage of theology and sacred music that can be traced for centuries, I have gotten the reply more than once: 'They also have Nazis.'

In 1807 the great theorist of modern war, Carl von Clausewitz, wrote an article called ‘The Germans and the French’ in which he compared the two nations. One was militaristic, and the subject-mentality of its people doomed them to political ‘obedience’; the other had a more literary bent, and its hypercritical inhabitants would be unlikely to submit to tyranny. The obedient militants were, of course, the French, the critically minded literary types the Germans. So much for ‘national character.’<sup>19</sup>

Steve Ozment comments further on this ‘critically minded literary people.’ Like Blackbourn, he also contrasts the French and German revolutions, separated primarily by the comparatively academic variant among the Germans. He speaks of the ‘intellectual torrents of the nineteenth century’ and attributes the German revolution to ‘a succession of brilliant thinkers, almost all lapsed Lutherans...beginning with a comparatively cautious Immanuel Kant and peaking with the ferocious Friedrich Nietzsche.’<sup>20</sup> He concludes that ‘in the end’ it was ‘the revolt of the intellectuals’ that ‘helped turn the German political stalemate into one of the most productive—and destructive transitions in German history.’<sup>21</sup>

#### Life before the Tübingen Appointment

Ferdinand Christian Baur’s parents, Christian Jacob Baur (1755 – 1817) and Eberhardine Regine Gross, were married in 1790, some months after the dissolution of France’s *Ancien Régime*. Mr. Baur had been working the last twelve years as a curate for the church at Holzelfingen in the Swabian Alb (*die Schwäbische Alb*) in Württemberg. Gross’s father was himself the superintendent of the district of Urach not far away. Upon their marriage they moved approximately twenty-five miles directly north to Schmiden, a little village sitting just about two miles east of the upper Neckar River, directly across the river from Stuttgart. Mr. Baur was to serve in Schmiden as vicar. The couple moved into the parsonage beside the little church, and not two years later their first son, Ferdinand Christian, was born on June 21, 1792. That was only sixty-three days after the French invasion of the Austrian Netherlands, the first battle

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *History of Germany 1780-1918* (*supra* note 6), xiv.

<sup>20</sup> *A Mighty Fortress* (*supra* note 13), 180.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



of the Revolutionary Wars,<sup>22</sup> and fifty days prior to the storming of the Tuileries Palace in Paris, where Louis XVI and his family were staying, and at which point he was arrested, to then be suspended, deposed, and finally guillotined on January 21,<sup>23</sup> seven months to the day following Ferdinand's birth. It was also in 1792 that Francis II acceded to the throne of Austria, thereby becoming the last of the Holy Roman Emperors, although that entity had not exercised any real, substantive power in the region of Central Europe since the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War in 1648, awarding unprecedented autonomy to the territorial princes.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the heated political climate of the region, there were the lingering memories of recently departed Enlightenment giants, such as David Hume (d. 1776), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d. 1778), Voltaire (d. 1778), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (d. 1781), and Moses Mendelssohn (d. 1786). The *Sturm und Drang* movement in literary circles that posed such a formative challenge to the Enlightenment's elevation of calculated reason was beginning to wane, and Romanticism was about to take off in full in the works of great German composers. Following the death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart a mere five months prior to Ferdinand's arrival, a brash young Ludwig van Beethoven (b. 1770) of Bonn was more than ready to replace him,<sup>25</sup> dedicating his *Eroica* symphony of 1803 to Bonaparte himself (and then

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<sup>22</sup> For an excellent description of the effects of the French revolutionary activities in German-speaking states like Saxony, Württemberg, and Bavaria, not least in Stuttgart and Ulm, see Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918*, 37-44.

<sup>23</sup> Incidentally, it was in April of 1792, just weeks before the birth of F.C. Baur, that France's National Assembly adopted this method of execution proposed by Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin, who himself did not actually invent the guillotine, but rather suggested the 'humane' device that was invented by his friend Antoine Louis. Cf. Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial, 1998), 700.

<sup>24</sup> The term Peace of Westphalia is a bit of a misnomer, as it does not refer to a document by that name, but actually two separate treaties, that of Osnabrück and that of Münster, signed on May 15 and October 28 of 1648 respectively. Davies (*Europe* [supra note 23], 568) notes the infuriated response of Pope Innocent X to the Treaty of Münster, due to its concessions to Protestants (particularly the Calvinists) and France: 'Behind his anger lay the realization that hopes for a united Christendom had been dashed forever. After Westphalia, people who could no longer bear to talk of "Christendom" began to talk instead of "Europe."'

<sup>25</sup> For a concise description of how Mozart's operas featured the values of the Enlightenment, see the Introduction to Isaac Kramnick (ed.), *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, The Viking Portable Library (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1995), especially pp. ix-x and 23-26.

scratching out the traitor's name after Napoleon crowned himself Emperor of France on December 2, 1804).

In the same year (1804), an intellectual powerhouse of Romanticism was rising in prominence: the Christian theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834), known today as the 'father of modern liberal theology,' took his first major research position as professor of theology at the University of Halle. He would leave that school and the city in 1807 due to the French occupation, eventually teaching and then serving as rector of the new University of Berlin, alongside Hegel himself. Schleiermacher had studied at Halle and dove headlong into the *Aufklärung* via Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), resulting in a rift between himself and his Lutheran Pietistic background, particularly his father. But whereas Kant in his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* of 1793 was aiming to study 'religion within the limits of reason alone,' Schleiermacher was writing an apology of a new, 'liberal' understanding of Christianity and Christian theology in his 1799 *Über die Religion*,<sup>26</sup> arguing instead that 'the essence of religion lies not in rational proofs of the existence of God,' 'but in a "fundamental, distinct, and integrative element of human life and culture"—the feeling (*das Gefühl*) of being utterly dependent on something infinite that manifests itself in and through finite things.'<sup>27</sup> Ironically, it was in fact the same year of Schleiermacher's appointment at Halle that Kant passed away at the age of 79, which in any case was an unusually long life for the time and place.

But advances were being made in medicine as well as theology. It was in 1796 that Edward Jenner in London invented vaccination, and in Leipzig during the same year Samuel Hahnemann invented homeopathy. Unfortunately, the prevalence of poverty and disease and the ongoing Revolutionary Wars set a pace of death that no advances in medicine could match. Blackbourn notes that in the German-

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<sup>26</sup> The full title is *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin: Verlag Johann Friedrich Unger, 1799; republished in Berlin/ New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1999; ET: *On Religion: Addresses in Response to Its Cultured Critics*, trans., Terrance N. Tice [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1969]).

<sup>27</sup> Roger E. Olsen, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 543. Olsen's quotation comes from Terrence N. Tice's introduction to Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Addresses in Response to Its Cultured Critics*, trans., Terrence N. Tice (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1969), 12.

speaking states of central Europe in the latter eighteenth century, ‘between a quarter and a third of all infants failed to survive their first year,’ and that half of those who did survive nevertheless would not make it to their tenth birthday.<sup>28</sup> Ferdinand’s parents felt blessed to watch their son growing every year, and before long he would have five siblings to add to their joy.

Not long after the *coup d’état* of 18 Brumaire VIII staged by General Bonaparte in November of 1799 and the subsequent creation of the Consulate, in the year 1800, Ferdinand’s father moved his family to Blaubeuren, twelve miles northwest of Ulm and the Danube (*die Donau*), still in Württemberg, nestled at the footsteps of the Swabian Alb (*die Schwäbische Alb*).<sup>29</sup> He was to be the superintendent of that district. He himself was highly educated in theological studies, which had begun for him at the lower seminary there in Blaubeuren when he was just 14. He graduated as a theology student from Tübingen University in 1778. As such, he took it upon himself to educate his young son, training him in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. And when Ferdinand reached the age of thirteen, he also enrolled in the lower seminary of Blaubeuren.

But at the same time of the family’s move, many other important changes were occurring in the area. In the year of the arrival of the Bours to Blaubeuren (1800), Württemberg became occupied by French forces and Friedrich III, duke of Württemberg since 1797, fled west to Vienna. In the next year (1801), the Treaty of Lunéville was signed (February 9), whereby Austria more or less surrendered to the armies of the French Republic, ending the Second Coalition.<sup>30</sup> Emperor Francis II set in motion that process that would have him step down and finally dissolve the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in the year 1806, but not before creating instead the Austrian Empire and naming himself its first emperor, Francis I. The treaty’s concessions to Napoleon dramatically simplified the geography of the

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<sup>28</sup> *History of Germany, 1780-1918*, 1. He further explains that ‘to survive childhood was an achievement, and life expectancy remained low even for those who survived. At a time when men typically married at twenty-eight, and women at twenty five, less than half of a given generation would normally reach marriage age.’

<sup>29</sup> Note that the *Schwäbische Alb* is not the same as the ‘Swiss Alps’ (*die Alpen*), although they are close to each other.

<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the treaty surrendered the lands on the left bank of the Rhine to France.

German landscape, particularly in the Western region and the Low Countries, essentially reducing the number of miniature states to mere dozens, as compared to hundreds.<sup>31</sup> As Agatha Ramm explains, ‘A scheme of compensation [*der Entschädigungsplan*] for the German princes was to be worked out, on the basis of the secularization of ecclesiastical territory, at a later congress.’<sup>32</sup>

For Friedrich III, compensation came in the form of a new title. In 1803 he became Prince-Elector of Württemberg. In anticipation of the official dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, he was granted Württemberg as his own regional monarchy by his new friend Napoleon on December 26, 1805. On the first day of the next year, he would ascend his own throne, receive a crown, and assume the title Friedrich I, King of Württemberg (d. 1816). It was also in 1805, on May 9, that the German poet Friedrich Schiller died at the age of 44. The same year saw the death of Gottlob Christian Storr (b. 1746). He was the founder of the ‘first Tübingen School,’ the progenitor of the proud theological heritage of Tübingen. He had been at the University for only a year when Ferdinand’s father, Christian Jacob, graduated. So his death may or may not have been important to the Baur family at the time, but the reorientation of the University thereafter would prove enormously important in Baur’s latter adolescence as a student there (one which, see below).

It was five weeks after Schiller’s death that Baur turned 13, and subsequently began at the lower seminary there in Blaubeuren. He and the other boys studied religion, Bible, Latin and Greek, the poets, rhetoric, German style, philosophy, history, and mathematics. Ferdinand was a good student, but not the best in his class. Upon the completion of his first two years, he was transferred to the Maulbronn kloster in 1807, now 15, for his second two years.<sup>33</sup> That was the same year Hegel published his

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<sup>31</sup> On which see Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918*, xvi, 44-49. Blackbourn (10) speaks of ‘dynastic states’ like Prussia, Austria, Saxony, Bavaria, Hannover, and Württemberg; ‘tiny statelets’ like Lippe and Lichtenberg; ‘ecclesiastical territories’ such as the ‘prince-bishoprics’ Mainz and Köln and the ‘substantial abbeys’ St. Blasien and Weingarten; fifty-one ‘imperial cities’ such as the ‘economic powerhouses’ Hamburg and Frankfurt, as well as large, substantial territories like Nürnberg, and ‘small communities’ like Weißenburg and Leutkirch ‘with populations in the thousands’; ‘nominal states’; ‘tiny entities numbering a few hundred souls’; and lastly, ‘the classic “home towns” in Southwestern Swabia and Franconia.

<sup>32</sup> *Germany 1789-1919: A Political History* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967), 50.

*Phänomenologie des Geistes*,<sup>34</sup> which would set the agenda for German idealism after Kant. Maulbronn was across the Neckar, sitting a little more than twenty miles northwest of Stuttgart. It was here (during his second year, actually) that Baur made a great, lasting friendship with Ludwig Friedrich Heyd, which would not end until Ludwig's death in 1842.<sup>35</sup> Another important note about Baur's time at Maulbronn would be that the superintendent there was the prelate J.F. Schelling, father of the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775 – 1854). In fact, an uncle of Schelling had been prelate at Blaubeuren while Baur had been there. There may be no hard evidence that Baur read any of Schelling or that at this early stage he was exposed to Schelling's philosophy,<sup>36</sup> but it is almost certain Baur would have thus known the name and perhaps a little more about the philosopher before his arrival as a student at the University of Tübingen.

That arrival occurred in 1809, when Baur was 17, some weeks after the death of Franz Joseph Haydn on May 31. He would remain there for five years and graduate at 22. Tübingen lay adjacent to the lower Neckar River, some twenty miles southwest of Stuttgart. Horton Harris calls Tübingen 'one of the most charming and fascinating university towns in Germany.'<sup>37</sup> It was a school that already had a tremendous reputation for its theology and philosophy. Philipp Melancthon had studied and taught there

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<sup>33</sup> Horton Harris (*The Tübingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation of the School of F.C. Baur*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990], 14-15) explains that a given year's class was known as a *Promotion*, and that in 1807 the king of Württemberg (Friedrich I, r. 1805 – 1816) approved an experiment that would take two students from different *Promotions* and put them together in the Maulbronn kloster together. Ferdinand happened to be the selected student from the Blaubeuren *Promotion* and that is how he ended up in Maulbronn.

<sup>34</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, System der Wissenschaft, Part 1 (Bamberg and Würzburg: Goebhardt), 1807.

<sup>35</sup> It is thanks to this friendship that we have access to numerous details of Baur's life as well his personal feelings on numerous events therein, as Baur wrote to Heyd on no less than 32 times between 1824 and 1842. These can be found in the *Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen*.

<sup>36</sup> For more on this see Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur*, Makers of Modern Theology (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), 9-11, 15, and Harris, *Tübingen School* (*supra* note 33), 14, 143-146.

<sup>37</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School* (*supra* note 33), 15.

prior to his arrival in Wittenberg.<sup>38</sup> Schelling and Hegel were also Tübingen alumni.<sup>39</sup> That tradition has continued into the present time, with more recent alumni including Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Walter Kasper, Hans Küng, and Joseph Ratzinger. Naturally, Ferdinand's first two years were spent in the philosophical faculty and Baur studied Plato and Aristotle.<sup>40</sup> According to a letter written by his brother, Friedrich August Baur, to Eduard Zeller one year after Ferdinand's death, dated January 12, 1861 (Baur died on February 12, 1860), it may also have been during this time in Tübingen that Baur 'busied himself' (*sich beschäftigte*) with the philosophies of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, the latter of which was a graduate of Tübingen himself.<sup>41</sup> Seemingly, it was Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* of 1800 that Baur was studying.<sup>42</sup> In other parts of Germany Schleiermacher was playing a role in the founding of the University of Berlin in 1810, and Hegel was putting the finishing touches on his *Wissenschaft der Logik*, the first *Theil* of which would appear in 1812 and 1813, followed by the second in 1816.<sup>43</sup>

In the years 1811-14, Baur studied in the theological faculty. That faculty had undergone some drastic changes some six years prior to his arrival. The founding member of the so-called 'Old Tübingen

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Not to mention the astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630).

<sup>40</sup> In the German tradition, *die Fakultät* is used to refer to a given department or division in a university.

<sup>41</sup> Speaking of Ferdinand, he writes: 'Daß er auf der Universität fleißig Philosophie studierte und in der Promotion dafür galt, daß er am meisten darin leiste, weiß ich, sowie daß es namentlich nach dem idealen Zug seines Geistes Fichte und Schelling waren, mit denen er sich beschäftigte und mit letzterem auch noch in Blaubeuren [i.e. as a teacher there at the lower seminary from 1817 to 1827], von wo aus er mich ernstlich anhielt, Schellings transzendenten Idealismus zu studieren – und den Freund der Identitätsphilosophie beurkundet seine Mythologie nicht minder, als den Mann der klassischen Literature.' The full text of this letter can be found in Ernst Barnikol, 'Das ideengeschichtliche Erbe Hegels bei und seit Strauss und Baur im 19. Jahrhundert,' in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Württemberg* X (Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche: 1), 282. Harris translates this excerpt into English in his *Tübingen School* (144). However, Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology* [*supra* note 36], 9) interprets this letter to mean that Baur did not in fact read Schelling until he was teaching at Blaubeuren.

<sup>42</sup> See my note 41, where Friedrich August Baur mentions 'Schellings transzendenten Idealismus.' See pp. 24-28 below for more on the influence of Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* in Baur's first major work, *Symbolik und Mythologie oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1824-1825). Schelling's work can be found in ET in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans., Peter Heath (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1978).

<sup>43</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 2 Parts (Nürnberg: Schrag, 1812-1813, 1816).

School,’ so called to differentiate it from the ‘Tübingen School’ associated with Baur later on, Gottlob Christian Storr (b. 1746), a ‘bullwark of orthodoxy,’<sup>44</sup> had died in 1805,<sup>45</sup> ending a twenty-eight year legacy.<sup>46</sup> Shortly after Storr’s death, Friedrich Gottlieb Süskind (1769 – 1829), another highly respected theologian at the University, left the faculty after only seven years there (1798 – 1805).<sup>47</sup> The replacement professors consisted of a pair of brothers, Johann Friedrich Flatt (1759 – 1821) and Karl Christian Flatt (1772 – 1843), both of whom are described as admirers of ‘Kantian rationalism’ by Harris,<sup>48</sup> and the grandson of the ‘famous prelate’ Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687 – 1752), Ernst Gottlieb Bengel (1769 – 1826). The ‘younger Bengel’ (as he is called) who joined the faculty in 1806 is also described as ‘touched deeply by Kantian philosophy and rational criticism’ by Peter C. Hodgson,<sup>49</sup> and by Gustav Fraedrich as one ‘who indeed also belonged to the Storr school, but who stood in a freer relation to it and had experienced a stronger influence from Kant and the post-Kantian rationalism.’<sup>50</sup>

So when Baur arrived the theological faculty was five years into a transition of sorts, although it essentially still maintained its supernaturalist orientation.<sup>51</sup> The teacher who had the biggest influence on

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<sup>44</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School*, 1. See also Gustav Fraedrich, *Ferdinand Christian Baur: der Begründer der Tübinger Schule als Theologe, Schriftsteller und Charakter* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1909), 3: ‘Aber man wird uns auf Storr und die alte Tübinger Schule verweisen als die Ritter der alten Rechtgläubigkeit.’

<sup>45</sup> This was the year Baur had entered the lower seminary at Blaubeuen.

<sup>46</sup> Storr had arrived in Tübingen in 1777.

<sup>47</sup> Süskind would go on to publish in 1812 a critical study of Schelling’s philosophy.

<sup>48</sup> *Tübingen School*, 138.

<sup>49</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 9.

<sup>50</sup> *Ferdinand Christian Baur* (*supra* note 44), 10 (trans., mine). AD: ‘Unter allen seinen Lehrern an der Universität machte nur Ernst Gottlieb Bengel, der Enkel Johann Albrechts, der zwar auch zur Storrschen Schule gehörte, aber in einem freieren Verhältnis zu ihr stand und stärkeren Einfluss von Kant und dem nachkantischen Rationalismus erfahren hatte...’

<sup>51</sup> The transition was not nearly as radical as that of 1826, which brought Baur and Friedrich Heinrich Kern from Blaubeuren to the theological faculty, leading up to the formation of the so-called ‘Tübingen School’ associated with Baur himself. For instance, another addition to the faculty, in 1815, was J.C.F. Steudel. Steudel would actually oppose the calling of Baur to Tübingen later, but afterwards the two got along fine, and Steudel helped found the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* in 1828 and served as its editor. The two, however, did butt heads over an article by Baur for the journal in 1831, because Steudel thought it undercut the view of the Bible as divine revelation. For

Baur was Bengel. In fact, Harris claims Bengel exerted ‘a commanding influence on the whole of Württemberg theology’ for his twenty years there.<sup>52</sup> He furthermore explains that ‘with Bengel the supernatural is simply an ethical supernaturalism, which may be understood either in the sense of Kant’s moral law, or as “truth,” and revelation is only necessary in order to communicate the divine truths to human reason.’<sup>53</sup>

It was in the summer of 1814, some months after the death of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, that Baur graduated from Tübingen. Fraedrich showers him with praise: ‘Thanks to his natural giftedness and above all thanks to his exceptional diligence, Baur left the Tübingen seminary and the university in the year 1814 as the most knowledgeable and capable of all his contemporaries.’<sup>54</sup> The next two years would be a busy time for him as well as Central and Western Europe itself. It had been in Baur’s student years, 1812-14, that an alliance of European powers overpowered Napoleon in the long, drawn-out War of the Sixth Coalition, ultimately driving him into exile in Elba. King Friedrich I of Württemberg conveniently switched sides and found himself on the winning team by the war’s end. After Napoleon’s disastrous invasion of Russia, an inspired Prussian-Russian alliance, in defeat, had nevertheless ‘inflicted casualties sufficient to force an armistice and bring Napoleon to the negotiating table, where Austria acted as an honest broker for the Germans.’<sup>55</sup> The indecisive negotiations eventually led to the largest (and in the end, decisive) conflict: the Battle of Nations, fought at Leipzig (thus also known as the Battle of Leipzig) in mid-October of 1813. It was in fact the largest European battle ever fought and remained so until the Great War (WWI) of the twentieth-century. Napoleon was defeated by an alliance comprised of numerous

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more, see below. See also Robert Morgan, ‘Ferdinand Christian Baur,’ in Ninian Smart, *et al* (eds.), *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 261.

<sup>52</sup> *Tübingen School*, 139.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ferdinand Christian Baur*, 13 (trans., mine). AD: ‘Dank seiner natürlichen Begabung und vor allem dank seinem ausserordentlichen Fleiss verliess Baur im Jahre 1814 als der kenntnisreichste und tüchtigste unter allen seinen Altersgenossen das Tübinger Seminar und die Universität.’

<sup>55</sup> Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress*, 162. Ozment (354, note 39) adds this observation: ‘Later, with equally disastrous results, an imperious Hitler would twice repeat Napoleon’s Russian blunder by sending a German army first to Moscow (December 1941), and then to besiege Stalingrad (January 1943)...’



German states (including Prussia), as well as Russia, Sweden, and Britain. ‘Although Napoleon broke the ensuing peace to fight and lose again, Leipzig had been his undoing.’<sup>56</sup> Seven months after Leipzig the Peace of Paris (May 30, 1814) redrew France’s borders to their location of 1792, prior to the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Five months later Prussia regained its lost territories in the Rhineland, including Westphalia, thanks to the Congress of Vienna, which began on November 1 and essentially ‘redrew the map of Europe to reinstate prerevolutionary national boundaries almost everywhere.’<sup>57</sup> At its end (June 8, 1815), an official German Confederation was formed, now to be made up of thirty-eight officially recognized states. One of these was Württemberg since the Congress affirmed Friedrich’s kingship there despite his former peace with Napoleon. Ten days after the Congress, Napoleon suffered his great defeat at Waterloo on June 18, thus (finally) ending the Napoleonic Wars. King Friedrich I died on October 30 of the next year. He was succeeded by William I, who would reign until 1864.

Meanwhile, Baur found work after graduation (1814) as a curate in Rosswaag, thirty miles directly north of Tübingen and just beneath Maulbronn, where he had studied before, and then in Mühlhausen. He then got an opportunity to teach as a tutor (unpaid) in the lower seminary at Schöntal, nearly 170 miles east of Rosswaag. It was probably the furthest Baur had ever been from home. It was also around this time that his mother died. He would get the chance to move closer to home in 1816, however, when he became the new tutor in the Tübingen *Stift*. He taught there until his father died in 1817, leaving him with the responsibility of providing for his five siblings at the age of 25. Fortunately, two vacancies had just opened at the nearby Blaubeuren lower seminary. According to Harris, it was the local Lutheran authorities who were sympathetic to Baur’s situation and who gave him one of those positions.<sup>58</sup>

Ferdinand began at Blaubeuren in the winter of 1817. He would remain there for nine school-years. He lectured mostly on the Greek and Roman prose writers and classical historians Livy, Tacitus,

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-163.

<sup>58</sup> *Tübingen School*, 17.

Herodotus, and Thucydides. His close friend, Friedrich Heinrich Kern (b. 1790), taught the poets Homer, Sophocles, and Virgil. Incidentally, it was also in this year that William I, the new king of Württemberg, transferred the theological faculty from the Catholic University of Ellwangen, which had been founded just five years prior by Friedrich I, to the University of Tübingen, which would now have two separate theological faculties, one Protestant and one Catholic. Among the incoming faculty were Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777 – 1853), Peter Aloys Gratz (1769 – 1849), Johann Georg Herbst (1787 – 1836), and the newcomer Johann Baptist von Hirscher (1788 – 1865). In the year 1819 they would together found a journal to be published out of the University, called the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, which is still in print to this day. Also in his first year at Blaubeuren, thanks to the welcome offer from his former teacher Dr. Bengel of Tübingen, Baur was published for the first time: a review (*eine Rezension*) for Bengel's journal *Archiv für die Theologie und ihre neueste Literatur*, which was to appear as the third piece of the second volume of 1818.<sup>59</sup> The work under review was the cutting edge research of Gottlieb Philipp Christian Kaiser, *Die biblische Theologie*,<sup>60</sup> which at the time was in two volumes with one more to come.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Rezension*: G.P.C. Kaiser, *Die biblische Theologie, oder Judaismus und Christianismus nach der grammatisch-historischen Interpretations-Methode, und nach einer freimüthigen Stellung in die kritisch-vergleichende Universalgeschichte der Religionen und in die Universale Religion*, in *Archiv für die Theologie und ihre neueste Literatur*, II (1818): 3: 656-717. Baur signs the *Rezension* only as '—r.' Harris (*Tübingen School*, 140) believes 'Baur probably composed' the review 'during his time as tutor in the Tübingen Stift (1816-17).'

<sup>60</sup> The series in its full title: *Die biblische Theologie oder Judaismus und Christianismus nach der grammatisch-historischen Interpretationsmethode und nach einer freymüthigen Stellung in die kritisch-vergleichende Universalgeschichte der Religionen und in die Universale Religion*, 3 Vols. (Erlangen: J.J. Palm, 1813-1821). Frederick C. Prussner and John Haralson Hayes (*Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* [Atlanta: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985], 91) translate the title as: "Biblical Theology or Judaism and Christianity according to the Grammatical-Historical Method of Interpretation and according to a Frank Position in the Critical Comparative Universal History of Religions and in Universal Religion."

<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, Prussner and Hayes (*Old Testament Theology*, 92) note that in his first two volumes Kaiser 'could find little that was of permanent value in the Old Testament.' But that 'later he passed sentence upon his own book and offered a far more favorable interpretation of the Hebrew morality in volume three written after he became professor of theology in Erlangen.' John Sandys-Wunsch (*What Have They Done to the Bible? A History of Modern Biblical Interpretation* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005], 261) reaches the same conclusion: 'The first two volumes of his Old Testament theology were an attempt to fit the Old Testament into the current notion of comparative religion; in the third volume he lapsed back into a conventional orthodoxy.'

Unfortunately Baur's *Rezension* has not been reprinted substantially in any of the secondary literature,<sup>62</sup> but is vital nonetheless. First, it is the only substantial writing of Baur (sixty-one pages) at this early stage. But also, the work under review and Baur's treatment of it literally laid the foundation of his future studies. Hence, Fraedrich: 'It is at the same time the most valuable document, which not only reflects Baur's standpoint at that time, but also sheds light for us on the fruit of his academic years and his continuing work.'<sup>63</sup>

Concerning Baur's 'standpoint at that time,' Harris provides the most illuminating observation. Frederick C. Prussner and John Haralson Hayes explain that Kaiser's work 'has often been placed in the same rationalistic category as the work of Samuel Reimarus' and that 'his biblical theology stands as a monument to the sort of hyper-rationalistic treatment of the Bible which was characteristic of his day.'<sup>64</sup> One notable example of Kaiser's 'hyper-rationalism' is his oft-cited denial of the physical resurrection of Jesus in history, opting instead to take most of the New Testament as mythical. The resurrection was a point of contention for Baur, and for this reason he is generally viewed by scholars as yet 'under the influence of Bengel and the old-Tübingen supernaturalism,' holding out for a 'supernaturally inspired, suprahistorically mediated revelation of unique religious truth' and drawing back 'from treating Christianity in a fully "historical-critical" mode.'<sup>65</sup> But Harris insists that this interpretation is flawed for its negligence. Despite the 'hyper-rationalism' of Kaiser, he notes 'it is interesting to observe how much Baur actually conceded to [his] arguments' and how he 'did not attempt to answer all the objections which Kaiser had raised, but contented himself mainly with a general criticism of [his] procedure.' 'He could hardly have conceded more to Kaiser without stepping outside the boundaries of the orthodoxy of

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<sup>62</sup> However, Fraedrich (*Ferdinand Christian Baur* [supra note 44], 13-18) provides some meaningful treatment of it with quotes, as does Harris (*Tübingen School*, 140-143) with some very helpful translated quotes.

<sup>63</sup> *Ferdinand Christian Baur*, 13 (trans., mine). AD: 'Sie ist zugleich das wertvollste Dokument, das nicht nur Baur's damaligen Standpunkt spiegelt, sondern auch über den Ertrag seiner Studienjahre und seiner Weiterarbeit uns Aufschluss gibt.' For his entire discussion, see his pp. 13-18.

<sup>64</sup> *Old Testament Theology* (supra note 60), 91-92.

<sup>65</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 10-11.

his time.’<sup>66</sup> So even before Baur read Schleiermacher (presumably in 1823; see below), it could be said that his mind was already comfortable outside the orthodoxy of the Old Tübingen School of Storr and that his exposure to Bengel’s open-mindedness and ‘Kantian rationalism’ as a student in Tübingen had a profound effect.

Concerning the way Baur’s *Rezension* may ‘shed light for us on his continuing work,’ it will be helpful to familiarize ourselves with Kaiser’s work. Horst Dietrich Preuss points out it ‘set forth Kaiser’s views on how a historical interpretation of the Old Testament should be carried out.’<sup>67</sup> In particular, as John Sandys-Wunsch explains, these ‘first two volumes of his Old Testament theology were an attempt to fit the Old Testament into the current notion of comparative religion,’ ‘to see the Old Testament not only against the background of its own age but also in relation to other religions.’<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Fraedrich asserts the title itself betrays its agenda,<sup>69</sup> which Prussner and Hayes translate as ‘Biblical Theology or Judaism and Christianity according to the Grammatical-Historical Method of Interpretation and according to a Frank Position in the Critical Comparative Universal History of Religions and in Universal Religion.’<sup>70</sup> Fraedrich furthermore cites Kaiser’s explicit goal:

to provide a very general sketch of world history by means of a philosophical and critical comparison of the world religions, or better, to provide a description of the main points of

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<sup>66</sup> *Tübingen School*, 142. Harris provides this translated excerpt from Baur’s *Rezension*: ‘We share with the author the high respect which this study of religions deserves and are completely convinced that it is above all the comparison of the history of religions which can preserve us from those one-sided and narrow-minded views quite incompatible with the spirit of true religion, and can make a true assessment of the service which Christianity has rendered, even though we are not able to agree completely with the results which the author believed he could attain through these investigations.’ (Baur, *Rezension*, 658; Harris, *Tübingen School*, 141) Then Harris offers this interpretation: ‘What displeased Baur about Kaiser’s book was not the aim of Kaiser’s program, but the fact that Kaiser had made such a poor job of carrying the program out.’

<sup>67</sup> *Old Testament Theology, Vol. 1*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>68</sup> *What Have They Done to the Bible?* (*supra* note 61), 261. Cf. Harris (*Tübingen School*, 140): ‘Kaiser, a convinced rationalist, had examined the historical religions in order to extract the universal element common to each and thus synthesize the true universal religion.’ But see note 61 concerning the changes in Kaiser’s outlook in his third volume.

<sup>69</sup> Fraedrich, *Ferdinand Christian Baur* (*supra* note 44), 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Old Testament Theology*, 91.

religion, obtained by comparing the different religions of the world, in order to solve the theological riddle of Judaism and Christianity by setting both in this comparison of religions.<sup>71</sup>

In his search for the ‘true universal religion,’ Harris emphasizes that ‘the universality of revelation’ was crucial, maximizing the value of *general* revelation.<sup>72</sup> Thus, according to Prussner and Hayes, Kaiser ‘could find little that was of permanent value in the Old Testament’<sup>73</sup> and viewed the supernatural content of the New Testament as mythical, including the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>74</sup> Preuss believes the classic address given by Johann Philipp Gabler of March 30, 1787 concerning the distinctive agendas of biblical and dogmatic theology, led scholars into discussions of the relation between the Old and New Testaments in new ways, raising further questions about the relation between pre- and post-exilic Hebrew religion and about particularism and universalism, and that not only Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette but also Kaiser (specifically his *biblische Theologie*) took up these questions in their works of 1813 and following.<sup>75</sup> Prussner and Hayes likewise believe the essential uniqueness of Kaiser’s offer was his assertion ‘that Israel never got beyond the stage of animism and narrow nationalistic particularism.’<sup>76</sup>

As I will show in the following Chapter this discussion about ‘nationalistic particularism’ and ‘universalism’ would become very important in Baur’s later interpretations of the New Testament and

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<sup>71</sup> Provided by Fraedrich, *Ferdinand Christian Baur* (*supra* note 44), 13. AD: ‘Von welchem Standpunkt aus Kaisers Werk geschrieben war, verrät schon der Titel; und wenn man das noch genauer und mit seinen eigenen Worten hören will, dann braucht man nur seine Bestimmung von seiner Aufgabe und seinem Zweck zu lesen: “einen sehr allgemeinen Abriss der philosophisch-kritisch vergleichenden Universalgeschichte, vielmehr eine parallelisierende Universalbeschreibung der Hauptmomente der Religion zu liefern, um das theologische Rätsel des Judentums und Christentums durch die Stellung beider in jene beantworten zu helfen und zu versuchen, den Schleier hinwegzuziehen, der über dem ältesten Palästina hing, um reine Resultate für die ewige, ideale Religion zu ziehen.”’ The ET is by Harris (*Tübingen School*, 140), who is actually translating from Baur’s *Rezension*, since he also isolated this line from Kaiser.

<sup>72</sup> *Tübingen School*, 140-141.

<sup>73</sup> Prussner and Hayes, *Old Testament Theology*, 92.

<sup>74</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School*, 141.

<sup>75</sup> *Old Testament Theology*, 1:1-2.

<sup>76</sup> *Old Testament Theology*, 92.

Paul's justification polemic.<sup>77</sup> But in the nearer context, the connections, even if indirect, between Kaiser's quest for 'true universal religion' by means of a historical, comparative investigation of world religions (read: natural religion) and Baur's first major work, *Symbolik und Mythologie, oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums* (1824-25),<sup>78</sup> would seem to be valuable in ways yet unnoticed in the secondary literature.<sup>79</sup> For example, Hodgson summarizes the work (in relative isolation from the *Rezension*) like this: 'The purpose of *Symbolik und Mythologie* was to provide a comparative, "scientific" analysis of nature religion, the basic categories of which are symbol and myth, in order to show the relations and distinctions between the nature religions and the historical religions, specifically Christianity.'<sup>80</sup> This resonates with Baur's explicit reaction to Kaiser in his *Rezension*:

We share with the author the high respect which this study of religions deserves and are completely convinced that it is above all the comparison of the history of religions which can preserve us from those one-sided and narrow-minded views quite incompatible with the spirit of true religion, and can make a true assessment of the service which Christianity has rendered...<sup>81</sup>

But the *Symbolik und Mythologie* did not appear until 1824. About two years after the *Rezension*, during the summer break of 1820, Ferdinand (28) met Emilie Becher (18), the daughter of a Stuttgart physician. He was vacationing in Kirchheim, a little more than one hundred sixty miles directly north of Blaubeuren. In not very long (October 20), he wrote to her father, acknowledging that he had only known Emilie for a short time and describing the immediate effect she had on him at the time, which had left him unable to leave Kirchheim without confiding in his sister his feelings.<sup>82</sup> The letter must have pleased, not least

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<sup>77</sup> See my pages 83-97 below.

<sup>78</sup> *Supra* note 42.

<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, the *Symbolik und Mythologie* usually is only mentioned in connection to the classic line in its preface: 'Ohne Philosophie bleibt mir die Geschichte ewig tot und stumm,' on which see below.

<sup>80</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 15.

<sup>81</sup> Baur, *Rezension*, 658. ET by Harris, *Tübingen School*, 141.

<sup>82</sup> Portions of the letter are translated by Harris in his *Tübingen School*, 17-18. Perhaps the most tender lines in the letter, and which offer a rare glimpse into the deeply human soul of Baur, read: 'If I am not to be followed throughout my whole life with the reproach, that when the time was right I let the happiness which seemed to meet

Emilie herself. The two wed in Stuttgart six months later, on April 30, 1821. Then it was back to Blaubeuren and back to work.

As noted above<sup>83</sup> Ferdinand's brother Friedrich claims in a letter to Eduard Zeller, written a year after the former's death, that it was in Blaubeuren that Baur 'busied himself' especially with Schelling's 'transcendental idealism.' Indeed, in a letter dated November 2, 1833 from Baur to Ludwig Bauer, a student he had in Blaubeuren, he highly recommends Schelling's *System des transscendentalen Idealismus* (1800) and says 'it has pleased me immensely.'<sup>84</sup> It has been noted that Schelling's influence can be seen clearly in the *Symbolik und Mythologie*, which appeared in two volumes in 1824 and 1825, although there is no explicit mention or acknowledgment of the name.<sup>85</sup> That influence can be seen in the oft-quoted line from the preface, which is also programmatic for the whole, perhaps also for Baur's entire life's work: 'Without philosophy, history always remains to me dead and mute.'<sup>86</sup> But more than Schelling, scholars especially draw attention to the shadow of Schleiermacher looming over the work.<sup>87</sup> His classic, *Der*

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me slip through my fingers, then I am left with no other choice than to turn directly to you with the request—if I may hope that my affection for your youngest daughter may meet with a corresponding inclination from her side—that the fatherly and motherly consent may be given to the object of my desire... In vain I must have dedicated my life to scientific investigation if anything else should have a higher place in my eyes than the priorities of heart and soul...'

<sup>83</sup> See my p. 16 and note 41.

<sup>84</sup> The letter is published in Carl Hester, 'Gedanken zu Ferdinand Christian Baur's Entwicklung als Historiker anhand zweier unbekannter Briefe,' in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LXXXIV (1973): 246-249. The quote above is on p. 254, and translated by Harris in his *Tübingen School*, 144.

<sup>85</sup> E.g. Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 15; Peter C. Hodgson, *Ferdinand Christian Baur on the Writing of Church History*, A Library of Protestant Thought (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1968), 3-4; *et al.*

<sup>86</sup> Baur, *Symbolik und Mythologie*, Vol. 1 (*supra* note 42): xi. AD: 'Ohne Philosophie bleibt mir die Geschichte ewig tot und stumm.' Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 15, note 55) notes that this line is often used to defend accusations of Hegelianism leveled at Baur, but as I will point out below (see my pages 33-34 and notes 119 and 123 and pp. 37-38), this text was obviously published some eight years prior to Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, nebst einer Schrift über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*, ed., Philipp Marheineke (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1832; ET: *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, One-Volume Edition: The Lectures of 1827, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans., R.F. Brown, *et al* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988]) and thirteen years prior to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, ed. Eduard Gans (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1837; ET of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.: *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. J. Sibree [London/ New York, NY: George Bell & Sons, 1894]).

<sup>87</sup> I say 'shadow' simply because, as with Schelling, there is no explicit reference to Schleiermacher. Hence, Heinz Liebing, 'Ferdinand Christian Baur's Kritik an Schleiermachers Glaubenslehre,' in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und*

*christliche Glaube* (conventionally referred to simply as the *Glaubenslehre*), had been published in the years 1821 and 1822<sup>88</sup> and Fraedrich rightly declares: ‘Its meaning for the theology of the nineteenth century is undisputed.’<sup>89</sup> Presumably, Ferdinand read the work in the spring and summer of 1823, also the year Emilie gave birth to the couple’s first child, Emilie Caroline (d. 1904).<sup>90</sup> Ferdinand wrote to his brother on July 26 bursting with praise:

No theological work has yet attracted me in so many respects as this, and apart from each peculiarity of view, it contains in each individual section so many rich ideas and so much for correcting the traditional dogmatic views that in fact it should be noticed more than seems to be the case at present...<sup>91</sup>

The next year he published the first volume of his *Symbolik und Mythologie*, with volume two in 1825, also the year Emilie delivered their first son, Ferdinand Friedrich (d. 1874).<sup>92</sup> Fraedrich boldly claims it is

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*Kirche* LIV (1957), 277: ‘Die Arbeit über „Symbolik und Mythologie“ von 1824/25 enthält zwar noch keine ausdrückliche Stellungnahme zu Schleiermacher. Sie bietet jedoch neben Aussagen und Konstruktionen, die deutlich auf Schleiermacher zurückgehen, auch ganz andersartige, für Schleiermacher unvollziehbare Gedankengänge.’ Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 97, note 29) however does cite p. vii of the *Symbolik* for some acknowledgement from Baur that his work is ‘deeply influenced by the first edition of Schleiermacher’s *Glaubenslehre*.’

<sup>88</sup> The full title of the work is *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1821-1822). The first edition (which is significantly different than the second edition of 1830-31, although it has yet to be translated into English) has recently been republished in the critical edition of Schleiermacher’s collected works, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Hans-Joachim Birkner, *et al*, Sect. I, Vol. 7, Parts 1-3 (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980). An ET of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. that comes highly recommended would be: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed., H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart, multiple translators (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), reprinted in 2 volumes (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1963) and again in 1 volume (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd., 1999).

<sup>89</sup> *Ferdinand Christian Baur*, 22 (trans., mine). AD: ‘Seine Bedeutung für die Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts ist unbestritten.’

<sup>90</sup> Emilie Caroline would marry Baur’s colleague and friend, Eduard Zeller, in 1847. Ferdinand himself delivered a special sermon for the occasion, which has been published in Ernst Barnikol, *Ferdinand Christian Baur als rationalistisch-kirchlicher Theologe* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1970).

<sup>91</sup> The letter has been published in Heinz Liebing, ‘Historisch-kritische Theologie: Zum 100. Todestag Ferdinand Christian Baur am 2. Dezember 1960,’ in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* LVII (1960): 238-243, and Barnikol, ‘Das ideengeschichtliche Erbe Hegels bei und seit Strauss und Baur,’ (*supra* note 41): 316-318. Parts of the letter have been translated by Harris in his *Tübingen School*, 146-149, where the translation above comes from (146). I find it hilarious that even in this letter of personal correspondence to his brother, he signs merely as ‘F. Baur.’ Walter Kaufmann (*Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965], 31) notes that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s widow referred to him in a letter written a couple days after his death to his best friend referring to him simply as ‘Hegel’!



not enough merely to say the work could not have been written without Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*. He believes the *Symbolik und Mythologie* is 'nearly a parallel work,' accomplishing for natural religion what Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* does for the construction of Christianity.<sup>93</sup> Hodgson delineates Baur's debt to Schelling and Schleiermacher in that he got from the latter his 'definition and typology of religion,' essentially arguing 'for the necessity of a general theory of religion in relating and interpreting the various religions,' drawing 'his definition and categorization of religion primarily from Schleiermacher.' Whereas from the former he developed his 'conception of revelation,' attempting

to understand, from a *religionsgeschichtlich* standpoint, the unity of all religions as different manifestations of divine revelation in history, a revelation which is no longer to be interpreted in terms of a distinction between nature and supernature, or history and superhistory, since nature and history themselves...are media of divine revelation.<sup>94</sup>

While Baur's relation to Schleiermacher in this early work has received more attention by scholars in general, Baur's interpreters in particular have emphasized his reserved, critical outlook upon Schleiermacher despite his favorable judgment of the potential of his theology.<sup>95</sup> Harris even claims 'Schleiermacher's influence upon Baur was certainly not as important as has sometimes been assumed.'<sup>96</sup> Furthermore it may well be more important for his overall project of historical theology that he derived this view of divine-revelation-in-history from Schelling. I will explain more in Chapter 4 how historical theology for Baur is unique in that it is essentially looking to history to answer the questions of theology,

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<sup>92</sup> It is amusing that Ferdinand and Emilie's first two children, a girl and a boy, were named Emilie and Ferdinand! The younger Ferdinand would later become a professor of theology at the lower seminary at Maulbronn from 1866 to 1874.

<sup>93</sup> *Ferdinand Christian Baur*, 23 (trans., mine). AD: 'Wenn man Baur's „Symbolik und Mythologie“ gelesen hat, muss man mehr sagen, als dass sie ohne Schleiermachers Glaubenslehre so nicht geschrieben wäre; sie will geradezu ein Parallelwerk dazu sein. Sie will dasselbe für die Naturreligion leisten, was Schleiermachers Glaubenslehre für die Konstruktion des Christentums ist.' See also Fraedrich's pp. 23-34 and 76-83.

<sup>94</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 15.

<sup>95</sup> E.g. see Joseph Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy, 1832-38: Romantic-Idealist Assessment of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation*, AAR Studies in Religion, No. 7 (Tallahassee, FL: American Academy of Religion, 1974), 5-10, and Harris, *Tübingen School*, 146-154.

<sup>96</sup> *Tübingen School*, 152.

i.e. looking for God in the story of humankind and the world's religions. But if the *Symbolik und Mythologie* 'is an investigation into the essence of religion'<sup>97</sup> and Baur therein suggests that humankind's religions are themselves 'this-worldly revelations of the divine,'<sup>98</sup> then this must surely be the fountainhead from which sprang all his subsequent studies on history-as-revelation. And given that, it is manifestly clear that Baur found in Schelling at this early point the key to the theology he would work out in his greater works yet to come. The *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* that pleased Baur so much articulated just such a view of history in ways yet unappreciated in Baur's secondary literature:

History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the Absolute... He continually reveals himself. Man, through his history, provides a continuous demonstration of God's presence, a demonstration, however, which only the whole of history can render complete.<sup>99</sup>

And:

Now if the appearance of *freedom* is necessarily infinite, the total evolution of the Absolute is also an infinite process, and history itself a never wholly completed revelation of that Absolute which, for the sake of consciousness, and thus merely for the sake of appearance, separates itself into conscious and unconscious, the free and the intuitant; but which *itself*, however, in the inaccessible light wherein it dwells, is Eternal Identity and the everlasting ground of harmony between the two.<sup>100</sup>

One further note about Baur's theological development and the influence of Schleiermacher and Schelling is that cited by Eduard Zeller in an article published shortly after Baur's death. He credited Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* with liberating Baur from the older, supernaturalist view of the Bible as inspired Holy Writ, which he had learned at Tübingen, a freedom that would later allow him to establish

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>98</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 97.

<sup>99</sup> Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 211.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

his own theological voice in works like the *Symbolik und Mythologie*.<sup>101</sup> Hodgson meanwhile marvels at the relatively late timing of this liberation: Baur was already thirty years old.<sup>102</sup>

### Professor in Tübingen

The year 1826 would prove pivotal in the life of Baur. On March 26, his old teacher, Ernst Gottlieb Bengel, died after twenty years at the University. Consequently there was an opening in the faculty at Tübingen. When it became clear that the esteemed historian of Berlin, August Neander, was uninterested, the young historian at Blaubeuren, Dr. Baur, also a Tübingen alumnus, became a strong candidate. Fresh off the heels of his impressive two-volume *Symbolik und Mythologie*, he was certainly the most attractive option in Württemberg. However, the former Tübingen professor Friedrich Gottlieb Süskind, who had published in 1812 a thoroughly critical study of Schelling's philosophy, opposed the calling of Baur to Tübingen. Apparently Süskind was not pleased with Baur's *Symbolik und Mythologie*, because in a letter to his friend Ludwig Heyd, likely written during the autumn or winter of 1825, Baur tells the story of an episode of two hours, wherein he was challenged by Süskind during the summer vacation. Süskind called him a pantheistic idealist and warned him off it. In his opposition to Baur's calling, he was joined by J.C.F. Steudel, who had joined the Tübingen theological faculty in 1815, shortly after Baur's graduation. He had well-known Pietistic leanings and Hodgson explains that he 'became increasingly antagonistic toward speculative theology and historical criticism as the years went on.'<sup>103</sup> But it was Süskind and Christian Friedrich Schmid, the unsalaried teacher in the Tübingen *Stift* since 1821, who actively sought to prevent Baur's appointment, reporting to the Ministry of Education that Baur was a devotee of Schelling's nature-philosophy and Schleiermacher's theology.<sup>104</sup> But Baur also had

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<sup>101</sup> Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 14) cites Eduard Zeller, 'Ferdinand Christian Baur,' in *Vorträge und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [L.W. Reiland]: 361-365.

<sup>102</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 14.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>104</sup> Part of this report is translated in Harris, *Tübingen School*, 21.

his supporters. More than one hundred students from Blaubeuren signed a petition on his behalf. The decision remained in the air through the summer vacation, and as late as August 19 Baur wrote to his friend Ludwig Heyd somewhat exasperated by the business: ‘The Tübingen affair against all expectation is still dragging on...’<sup>105</sup>

As it turns out, the Ministry believed the faculty was in need of several young faces, and not only Baur, but also his Blaubeuren colleague Friedrich Kern were brought on as full, salaried professors. In addition Christian Schmid was promoted to assistant professor. Steudel, the old man, was promoted to department head. In general the four men got along well throughout their time together, which would not be broken until the death of Steudel in 1837 and furthermore upon the death of Kern in 1842, although by then Baur and Kern had slightly more conflicting religious convictions.<sup>106</sup> Steudel was in charge of dogmatics, apologetics, and Old Testament exegesis. Kern also taught dogmatics, as well as Christian ethics. Schmid taught homiletics, catechism, and pedagogy. Baur was the historian, teaching church history, history of dogma, New Testament history and exegesis, and theology.<sup>107</sup> It is possible that things might have started on a bad foot, when, according to a letter by Baur to Heyd on September 19, 1826, he received an antagonizing letter from Steudel, expressing his ‘hopes’ that the faculty would not be teaching two different kinds of God or two different kinds of Christ.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, the team resolved to work together and their relationship was amicable, save one incident in 1831 when Steudel, who was serving as editor of the newly-founded *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* (see below), took issue with an article submission by Baur, on the basis that he felt it defied the traditional view of the Bible as divine revelation. But even that situation was settled peacefully and the article in question was published the following year without restriction.<sup>109</sup> Baur also worked as the director of the seminary (*das Stift*) and as

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<sup>105</sup> Translated in part in *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> See *ibid.*, 40.

<sup>107</sup> See Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 16. See also Harris, *Tübingen School*, 22.

<sup>108</sup> Translated in part by Harris, *Tübingen School*, 22.

the morning preacher (*der Frühprediger*) in the university church (*die Stiftskirche*) on Sundays and special occasions. He was even promoted to first morning preacher (*der erste Frühprediger*) following the death of Kern in 1842.

One other thing of potential significance occurred in late 1826. In the two aforementioned letters of Baur to Heyd on August 19 and September 19, he discusses a translation he had been working on for some time, that of Thucydides's classic, *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*. Apparently, he had finished the first two books and submitted them to his editor, who rejected it upon finding it too literal. It might be interesting to speculate on the possible results for Baur's career and his life's works, not to mention the breadth of his influence and reputation in scholarship in general, if the translation had been accepted and successful.

Baur's inaugural dissertation in the faculty, written in Latin and presented over the course of 1827 and 1828, was a three-part study of rationalism and supernaturalism, including a lengthy analysis of Schleiermacher's theology, concluding that it was a form of Christian Gnosticism. Also in 1828 the faculty members, principally Steudel, founded a journal that would function as a voice for their new partnership, the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*. Steudel himself served as editor, while the others were co-editors. In its first year Baur published a report (*die Anzeige*) in German concerning the first two parts of his earlier dissertation as well as two book reviews. In 1829 Emilie gave birth to another daughter, Marie Pauline (d. 1920). That was also the year Friedrich Gottlieb Süsskind died. Baur published another study in Latin, this time on the speech of Stephen in Acts 7. He would publish another article for the *Zeitschrift* in 1830, and in the following year write two more. The first of these was originally opposed by Steudel, as he felt it undermined a traditional view of the Bible as divine revelation. The two scholars argued over it and Baur threatened to withdraw from the *Zeitschrift*. But they resolved their differences

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<sup>109</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, 'Über die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Passahfestes und des Beschneidungsritus,' in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* VI (1832): 1: 40-124. See Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 12.

and Steudel published it without revision the next year.<sup>110</sup> But this was only a minor setback compared to the Baur's unfortunate loss of their third daughter, Fanny Elise, who was born and died within a month.

Nevertheless, the year that saw the publication of Victor Hugo's classic *Notre-Dame de Paris* and the death of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831) was a productive year for Baur. He wrote a new book called *Das manichäische Religionssystem nach den Quellen neu untersucht und entwickelt*,<sup>111</sup> and what has perhaps become his trademark piece, his article for the *Zeitschrift*, the three-part title of which was unusually long even at the time: 'Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom.'<sup>112</sup> The piece is sometimes abbreviated as 'The Christ-Party in Corinth.' Klaus Scholder includes this article in what he calls Baur's 'most important historical works'<sup>113</sup> and James D.G. Dunn calls it his 'most famous work.'<sup>114</sup> Robert Morgan declares the article 'marks an epoch in the history of New Testament criticism.'<sup>115</sup> Baur saw in 1 Cor. 1:12 evidence of multiple conflicting parties within the earliest church, primarily divided along the lines of the Apostles Peter and Paul and their respective converts. The perceived conflict was characterized by their differing attitudes toward the Jewish law and the status of Gentiles within the newly formed Jesus movement. Dunn summarizes the work like this:

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<sup>110</sup> Part of a letter from Baur to Ludwig Heyd on October 1, in which he speaks of these matters, is translated in Harris, *Tübingen School*, 23.

<sup>111</sup> Published in Tübingen by Hopfer de l'Orme. This work has been republished in 1928 and 1973.

<sup>112</sup> Published in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* V (1831): 4: 61-206. This piece has been reprinted in Baur's posthumous *Ausgewählte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed., Klaus Scholder (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzbog], 1963): 1:1-146. ET: 'The Christ-Party in the Corinthian Community, the Opposition of Petrine and Pauline Christianity in the Early Church, the Apostle Peter in Rome.' See my p. 33 and note 118 on a partial ET of this article.

<sup>113</sup> See his 'Vorwort' in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Ausgewählte Werke*, 1:vi (trans., mine). AD: 'Die Neuauflage der wichtigsten historischen Arbeiten Ferdinand Christian Baur's ist mehr als ein Akt der Pietät.'

<sup>114</sup> See his 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 4. Hodgson (*Ferdinand Christian Baur* [supra note 85], 4) identifies the work as 'the most important' of all Baur's works in the 1830's.

<sup>115</sup> 'Biblical Classics II. F.C. Baur: Paul,' in *The Expository Times* 90 (1978), 4.

Baur's thesis was that this conflict between two factions, one with distinctive Jewish tendencies, and the other, Pauline Christianity, shaped the history of Christianity for the first two centuries of its development. And who made the ultimately decisive contribution to free Christian universalism from Jewish particularism? Paul, of course. So too it was Baur who insisted that the opponents of Paul in all his letters were 'judaizers', proponents of a stultifying Jewish Christianity who insisted that Paul's Gentile converts conform to the restrictions of the Jewish law.<sup>116</sup>

This apostolic conflict would serve as a guiding hermeneutic in all of Baur's future New Testament and church history studies and is probably the idea for which he is most known. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell state unequivocally that 'this essay stands head and shoulders above other contributions from the time in terms of its continuing influence in scholarship.'<sup>117</sup> While the 'Christuspartei' has not been translated into English, the most important part of it was included in the *Paulus* of 1845, which has been translated.<sup>118</sup> So I will provide below in my discussion of that work (and the *Church History of the First Three Centuries*) a more detailed engagement of this theory as well as its reception in Chapter 3 after, including not only its prevalence in biblical studies in the latter nineteenth and then twentieth centuries but also its increasing importance in contemporary discussions of the Apostle Paul and the earliest church given recent strides in New Testament studies. But for now it is important to explain that in his later work on Paul and early church history Baur would extend this line of thought to say that the apostolic conflict racked the early church and then was later resolved in the formation of Catholicism proper, and that the New Testament texts bear witness to the many stages of the conflict. Thus it is here that Baur is often negatively associated with the philosopher Hegel, based on a simplistic view of the latter's dialectic idealism and the formula: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. However, Hodgson points out that Baur's research for the article began in 1826 during his lectures on the book of Acts and the Corinthian epistles, although

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<sup>116</sup> Dunn, *Cambridge Companion to St. Paul* (*supra* note 114), 4.

<sup>117</sup> Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (eds.), *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 51.

<sup>118</sup> In the German 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (see the full citation in my note 152), this can be found in 1:289-303, corresponding to pp. 61-90 (esp. 72-90) of the 'Christuspartei' with some modifications. In the ET (full citation in my note 151), it begins on 1:269 with the words 'In the first Epistle,' and ends with 'appearance of the Lord' on 1:281. The same excerpt has also been included in its ET in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth* (*supra* note 117), 51-59.

the implication of a letter from Baur to his brother Friedrich August, dated February 15, 1835, is that it was not until the winter of 1833-34 that he first read the ‘Religionsphilosophie’ of the Berlin master.<sup>119</sup> Accordingly it is not until his 1833 polemical article against his Catholic colleague, Johann Adam Möhler,<sup>120</sup> that he indicates in print some knowledge of Hegel’s philosophy: ‘It is in general the Hegelian method which the author of this article employs in order to provide a solution to the task he has set himself.’<sup>121</sup> Given this, it is likely that Baur’s familiarity with Hegel was the result of the posthumous publication of his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* in 1832.<sup>122</sup> In Chapter 3 and especially Chapter 4 below, I will provide a fuller treatment of Baur’s relation to the dialectic philosophy of Hegel, but it is at least clear at this early point that, as serious Baurian scholarship has labored to demonstrate and contrary to popular belief, to whatever degree Baur should be called Hegelian, he arrived at his New Testament interpretations and his theory of early apostolic conflict—explained in the ‘Christuspartei’ article of 1831—on his own<sup>123</sup> and that the first place where the speculative philosophy clearly appears in his work is in the 1835 monograph on the history of dogma, *Die christliche Gnosis*.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> This is almost certainly a reference to the 1832-publication of Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (*supra* note 86). See his *Formation of Historical Theology*, 23, but then his corrections in his *Ferdinand Christian Baur*, 4-5, note 5. Harris (*Tübingen School*, 25-26) likewise agrees with this dating, as does Wolfgang Geiger, *Spekulation und Kritik: Die Geschichtstheologie Ferdinand Christian Baur* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1964), 42-43. Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 23) is probably right that Baur first learned of Hegel through David Friedrich Strauss, who had spent the winter of 1831-32 in Berlin, specifically seeking out Hegel, though the latter died shortly after the former’s arrival. Harris (*Tübingen School*, 26) adds that when Hegel died of cholera on November 14 shortly after Strauss’s arrival, the former pupil of Baur remained in Berlin to listen to the other Hegelian lecturers.

<sup>120</sup> On which, see immediately below and my pp. 35-37.

<sup>121</sup> Translated quote provided by Harris, *Tübingen School*, 26.

<sup>122</sup> *Supra* note 86.

<sup>123</sup> See also my note 86, as well as Robert Morgan, ‘Ferdinand Christian Baur’ (*supra* note 51), 262, where he likewise claims that Baur’s general conceptions and methodology were formulated and put to use (not least in his *Symbolik und Mythologie* of 1824-25) ‘a decade before he found in Hegel the most helpful metaphysical handmaid for a contemporary theology,’ he ‘already saw the need of a philosophical conceptuality which would allow him to speak of God in and through his critical historical work.’ Again, see Robert Morgan and John Barton, *Biblical Interpretation*, The Oxford Bible Series (Oxford/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 71; William Baird, ‘The Influence of Philosophical Idealism,’ in *History of New Testament Research*, Vol. 1: From Deism to Tübingen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 261; and Klaus Penzel, ‘Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur Please Stand Up?’ in *Journal of Religion* 48 no 3 JI (1968): 313. Penzel notes that at this point Baur was 42, and



In the following year (1832), one of the members of the Catholic theological faculty, Johann Adam Möhler (1796 – 1838), who had joined the faculty in 1823, published a work on that subject addressed by Baur in his first major work of 1824-25, namely symbolics. Symbolics fell within the umbrella of the historian's responsibilities and was essentially the comparative study of religion by means of various religious confessions. Joseph Fitzer notes that due to the unique situation at the University of Tübingen—the blending of the Protestant and Catholic faculties—it became 'more than ever necessary that the Catholic clergy and public be accurately informed as to confessional differences between Catholics and Protestants.'<sup>125</sup> The work was based on his lectures in the two previous school years, a polemical book on the differences between Catholicism (= superior) and Protestantism (= inferior). It was titled *Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten*.<sup>126</sup> Möhler himself explained his intentions through this definition of symbolics:

By symbolics we understand the scientific exposition of the doctrinal differences among the various religious parties opposed to each other in consequence of the ecclesiastical revolution of the sixteenth century, as these doctrinal differences are evidenced by the public confessions or symbolical books of those parties.<sup>127</sup>

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therefore a mature scholar in his own right. See especially Chapters 3 and 4 below for more on Baur's relation to Hegel.

<sup>124</sup> The full title of that work is *Die christliche Gnosis, oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: C.F. Osiander, 1835). For this work as the first place where Baur seems to consciously put Hegel's philosophy to work, which also accords with his own testimony later, see Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 23-24), Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur* (*supra* note 95), 10-11; Harris (*Tübingen School*, 26-27).

<sup>125</sup> Noted by Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy* (*supra* note 95), 19.

<sup>126</sup> The full title is *Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihrer öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften* (Mainz: n.p., 1832). Further editions were published in 1833, 1834, 1835, and 1838. ET of the 5<sup>th</sup> ed.: *Symbolism: or, Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants, as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., trans., James Burton Robertson (New York, NY: The Catholic Publication House, n.d.). Fitzer (*Moehler and Baur in Controversy*, 3, note 3) recommends the modern, critical edition of the German original: Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten*, 2 Vols., ed. Josef Rupert Geiselmann (Cologne and Olten: Jakob Hegner, 1958-60).

<sup>127</sup> Möhler, *Symbolism* (trans., Robertson; *supra* note 126), 21.

Möhler's work is articulate and well argued, but delivers scathing criticisms of Protestantism to say the least.<sup>128</sup> James Westfall Thompson says the 'famous' book 'created a furor and was translated into English, French, and Italian.' 'Though Möhler felt his purpose had been irenic, the Protestant world took it as an attack.'<sup>129</sup> The very next year, Baur responded with an article published in the *Zeitschrift*,<sup>130</sup> which was republished in book form the next year: *Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus nach den Principien und Hauptdogmen der beiden Lehrbegriffe*,<sup>131</sup> the same year that Emilie delivered another son, Albert Otto.<sup>132</sup> But just as important as the work was in its own right, were the subsequent studies to which it gave birth in the next two years. Baur set out to write an apology of Protestantism, and in doing so he picked up exactly where he had left off in the 'Christuspartei' article of two years earlier. He argued that his alleged division within the early church, the Petrine and Pauline party-lines, could be seen as a precursor to the differences separating Catholicism and Protestantism in his own time. (This is interesting because he would later claim that it was the synthesis of these two parties in the early church that resulted in the Catholic Church. It was perfectly consistent with his whole program to suppose that the Protestant Reformation had revived that same old division from the earliest church.) Whereas the Hebraists (the party most closely affiliated with the Apostle Peter and most loyal to Judaism) were seen by him as a group whose religion was primarily centered upon ritual (circumcision, etc) and other external factors (= Catholicism), he believed the Hellenists (the party most closely affiliated with the Apostle Paul and most independent of Judaism) were more spiritual and purely religious (=

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<sup>128</sup> Fitzer's *Moehler and Baur in Controversy* provides in-depth analyses of Möhler's work as well as Baur's response. That study is highly recommended, as it contains numerous block quotes that allow the reader to get the gist of the works straight from the authors themselves. All quotes are also provided in ET.

<sup>129</sup> James Westfall Thompson and Bernard J. Holm, *A History of Historical Writing*, Vol. II: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1942; reprint, 1967), 536.

<sup>130</sup> 'Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus nach den Principien und Huptdogmen der beiden Lehrbegriffe. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Herrn Dr. Möhler's *Symbolik*,' in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* III (1833: 4): 1-438.

<sup>131</sup> The full title is: *Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismuc nach den Principien und Hauptdogment der beiden Lehrbegriffe, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Herrn Dr. Möhler's Symbolik* (Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1833-34). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1836.

<sup>132</sup> Harris (*Tübingen School*, 18) notes Albert went into zoology and anatomy, although he died at only 34 in 1868.

Protestantism). As Bruce N. Kaye observes, ‘There is a considerable contrast here between formal and external legitimation on the one hand and internal and spiritual legitimation on the other.’<sup>133</sup> He goes on:

[This] considerable monograph outlined the contrast between Catholicism and Protestantism in very much the terms which he had identified two years earlier in the Christ party article. Catholicism is like Judaism in its attachment to the formal and external, Protestantism is like Pauline Christianity in its attachment to the inner and the spiritual.<sup>134</sup>

It was no great leap from here for Baur to draw a connection between his precious ‘Paulinism’ and the ultra-internal Christian Gnosticism of the second century. And since Gnosticism and Protestantism obviously favored Paul (c.f. Marcion, Martin Luther),<sup>135</sup> they were deemed the right sort of religion, as opposed to Catholicism with its obvious favoring of Peter (if not also Judaism), the wrong sort.

These developments paved the way in 1835 for his first major work on the history of dogma, *Die christliche Gnosis*.<sup>136</sup> This is the work cited by scholars as the first place where Baur certainly displays affection for the philosophy of Hegel. Harris translates a portion of a letter written by Baur to his brother Friedrich August Baur on February 15, 1835, where he describes his forthcoming book, hopefully to be published by Easter:

The title is: ‘Christian Gnosticism, or the Christian Philosophy of Religion in its Historical Development.’ The last section deals with the newer philosophy of religion—J. Böhme, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel. Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Religion’ has especially engaged me this winter and in many ways has attracted me. I shall probably also give offence since I cannot find the atrocities in it which are usually supposed to burden it.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> ‘Lightfoot and Baur on Early Christianity,’ in *Novum Testamentum* 26 JI (1984), 201.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Note Albert Schweitzer (*Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1912]; ET: *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans., W. Montgomery [New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1951], 2): ‘The Reformation fought and conquered in the name of Paul. Consequently the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles took a prominent place in Protestant study.’ For more on Baur’s affection for Paul, see my pp. 42-43 and note 154 below and pp. 83-97 in Chapter 3. Of course Marcion may not be Gnostic proper, but his version of Christianity was certainly related to it.

<sup>136</sup> *Supra* note 124.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted and translated in Harris, *Tübingen School*, 26.

Note Baur's mention of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Religion,' a reference to the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, published in 1832.<sup>138</sup> Hodgson sees a connection between Baur's *Christliche Gnosis* and his earlier study written when he first joined the Tübingen faculty, wherein he identified Schleiermacher's theology as a form of Gnosticism:

*Die christliche Gnosis* represented a return to the thesis first expounded in Baur's inaugural dissertation, that there are marked similarities between ancient Gnosticism and modern Protestant philosophies of religion. Now a full-scale historical measurement was provided, beginning with the concept and origin of *gnosis*, and continuing with types of pagan and Jewish religious speculation, a classification of Christian Gnostic systems, the conflict between Gnosticism and Church doctrine, and the transition from old Gnosticism to the "modern philosophies of religion."<sup>139</sup>

Furthermore, this course of study produced Baur's next book, also published in 1835, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus*.<sup>140</sup> Here Baur joined the ongoing discussion begun in 1807 by Schleiermacher's *Über die sogenannten ersten Briefe des Paulus an den Timotheus*.<sup>141</sup> Schleiermacher had challenged the authenticity of 1 Timothy as written by Paul. This had sparked a controversy that numerous scholars had been eager to join, either for or against Schleiermacher's thesis.<sup>142</sup> But whereas Schleiermacher used 2 Timothy and Titus to undermine 1 Timothy,<sup>143</sup> Baur came along and argued against the authenticity of *each* of these 'so-called pastoral epistles.' His contention was that the false-teachers opposed in those epistles represent a form of second century Gnosticism, not altogether unlike

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<sup>138</sup> See my note 86.

<sup>139</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 24.

<sup>140</sup> The full title of the work is: *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus aufs neue kritisch untersucht* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta'schen Verlagshandlung, 1835).

<sup>141</sup> The full title of the work is: *Über die sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus: Ein kritisches Senseschreiben an J.C. Gass* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1807).

<sup>142</sup> Two important, recent treatments of this whole episode are Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 35A: 42-54, and Hermann Patsch, 'The Fear of Deutero-Paulinism: The Reception of Friedrich Schleiermacher's "Critical Open Letter" Concerning 1 Timothy,' trans., Darrell J. Doughty, in *Journal of Higher Criticism* 6/1 (Spring 1993): 3-31.

<sup>143</sup> Noted by Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters* (*supra* note 135), 8. Noted earlier by Hermann Olshausen, *et al: Biblical Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 5 (New York, NY: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1858), 467.

the views of the second century heretic Marcion, and that the pastorals aim to put down the movement with a hierarchical appeal to the authority of the bishops and elders not prevalent in the mid-second century. Therefore the epistles could not have been written by the Apostle Paul or even in his lifetime, but by a much later hand.<sup>144</sup>

The year 1835 is important to Baur's story for at least one more reason. His former student, David Friedrich Strauss, then *Privatdozent* at Tübingen, published his first major work, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*.<sup>145</sup> That title was truly epoch-making, as much as any other in the history of biblical studies, and there has rightfully been a great deal of attention given to it since then.<sup>146</sup> Bart D. Ehrman calls it 'an amazing book' of 'nearly 1,500 pages of detailed and meticulous argumentation involving every story in the Gospels' that 'completely stood the field on its head: a remarkable feat, considering that the author was only twenty-seven years old.'<sup>147</sup> However it was anything but well-received at the time. The claims of Strauss were so radical that he was immediately stripped of his status at Tübingen as *Privatdozent*—a decision that Baur protested—and in fact never again had another opportunity to give a university lecture anywhere.

At the time there were more or less two options available to the interpreter of the New Testament Gospels. On the one hand there was the traditional, Christian perspective, which held that the Gospel

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<sup>144</sup> Baur would address these matters again in his 1845 major study of Paul (see below). Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 17) believes this radical thesis led to Baur's failure to acquire a coveted position at the German University of Halle in the latter 1830's.

<sup>145</sup> Published in two volumes in Tübingen by Osiander. Schweitzer (*Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 78) notes that it was published in an unaltered second edition in 1836, followed by a third edition with alterations in the years 1838-39, and then in a fourth edition, which agreed with the first, in 1840. The ET was by George Eliot, published by John Chapman in three volumes in 1846, under the title: *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. One notable recent edition of the work is that edited by Peter C. Hodgson, who also provides an excellent introduction (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1972).

<sup>146</sup> An excellent starting place for a brief, contextual summary of Strauss's work and its effects can be found in Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 21-32. He refers to the piece as 'earthshattering.' See also the general discussions of Morgan and Barton, *Biblical Interpretation* (*supra* note 123), 44-54; Stephen C. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961* (London/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964), 12-19; and of course Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 68-120.

<sup>147</sup> *Jesus* (*supra* note 146), 27.

accounts of Jesus' miracles are literally true histories and there is no good reason to question them. The divine Christ performed supernatural miracles precisely because he was supernatural. They are 'supernatural histories.' On the other hand there was the modern, critical perspective won by Enlightenment rationalism. This type of reading was fairly new. It was the approach taken by those theologians who sympathized with the naturalist convictions that spurred the Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than true accounts of supernatural occurrences, they said the Gospels contained mistaken descriptions of natural, albeit stupendous, events. In other words, Jesus did not actually walk on water or cast demons out of people. There are logical explanations as to these miracles and it is the job of the biblical interpreter to account for them. For instance, Jesus never encountered any true demoniacs, but only victims of epilepsy. Since the disciples at the time lacked any sophisticated knowledge of biology and medicine, they came to various, supernatural conclusion. And Jesus did not walk across the midst of the Sea of Galilee; he was close to the shore walking in the shallow water. The disciples merely believed Jesus walked on water due to thick fog and their frightened state. The Gospels are 'natural histories.'

The critical position had proven scandalous enough, but Strauss created a whirlwind of controversy when he surpassed even his rationalist peers. He called both approaches fallacious. And whereas the critical reading had challenged the accuracy of the Gospels but maintained the integrity of the Evangelists by claiming that they were merely confused, Strauss said they invented their stories from whole cloth to suit their own agendas at the time of writing. He said the Gospels were devoid of historical truth and unreliable sources for information regarding Jesus (who surely was not divine in any case; at least the critical scholars had gotten that right). They are neither supernatural nor natural histories; the stories within are myths, narratives intended to convey timeless, spiritual truths.<sup>148</sup>

In a very short time Adam Karl August von Eschenmayer, a medical doctor and alumnus of Tübingen, wrote a small, polemical pamphlet (*die Streitschrift*) in response to the *Leben Jesu*, calling it

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<sup>148</sup> See *ibid.*, 29. This is not completely unlike the 'historical metaphor' approach of Marcus J. Borg ('Reading Lenses: History and Metaphor,' in his *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously but not Literally* [New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001], 37-53).

‘der Ischariotismus unsere Tage,’ meaning ‘the Ischariotism of our days.’ The pamphlet was sent to and received by the president of the *Evangelische Verein*, prompting Baur’s immediate resignation from that society. He wrote an opinion (*das Gutachten*) with his resignation and ‘insisted that critical, “scientific” theology is not inimical to faith and that it must be allowed to pursue the truth, without the limitation of dogmatic presuppositions.’<sup>149</sup> It would take Baur 12 years to provide a full, direct answer to the challenges of Strauss, with his *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* of 1847<sup>150</sup> and then in 1851, *Das Markusevangelium nach seinem Ursprung und Charakter*.<sup>151</sup> The delay was due to the fact that while he agreed with Strauss that the question of the historical Jesus is the most important question in Christian theology, he had enough vision to see that the issue is wrapped up and interwoven with others, such as how the movement begun by Jesus became the Christian religion—distinct from Judaism, the religion of Jesus—which then produced these Gospels, which provide our most direct access to Jesus. That led him once more into the study of the early church and thus the Apostle Paul. So I will take the remainder of this chapter to discuss in general the two works that are thought by most to encapsulate better than any other works what was the biblical theology of F.C. Baur: namely the *Paulus* and the *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*.

It would take Baur until 1845 to publish his major study of Paul and his role in the formation of Christianity. He certainly kept busy in the ten years prior, producing numerous articles and reviews, but what is perhaps more important for this time is the considerable amount of loss he suffered. In 1837 J.C.F. Steudel died. He had been the department head since Baur’s arrival in Tübingen. Although they got off on a bad foot, the two had worked out an amicable relationship. Steudel had published numerous works of Baur in the *Zeitschrift* despite their conflicting theologies. Two years later Emilie became very ill and died. Baur was left to parent their 4 children—2 boys and 2 girls, 2 teenagers and 2 under 10—by

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<sup>149</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 24-25.

<sup>150</sup> The full title is *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältniss zu einander, ihren Charakter und ursprung* (Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1847).

<sup>151</sup> The full title is *Das Markusevangelium nach seinem Ursprung und Charakter. Nebst einem Anhang über das Evangelium Marcions* (Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1851).

himself. Then in 1842 Baur's longtime friend Friedrich Heinrich Kern died. The two had taught together at Blaubeuren and then come to Tübingen together.

Nevertheless, in the year 1845 Baur published what has become his most important book, the 2-volume *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*,<sup>152</sup> which Hodgson calls simply 'the most important contribution to Pauline studies of the nineteenth century.'<sup>153</sup> A single-volume second edition would be published posthumously in 1866. It was edited by Eduard Zeller, who also wrote an introduction for the work, claiming that 'among the numerous investigations of earliest Christianity and its documents to which Baur was dedicated, none were tended by him with greater love, and none reflected in itself a greater portion of his academic activity, as the *Paulus*.'<sup>154</sup> More recently, Morgan has said that Baur's *Paulus* 'was his own favorite of all his writings, and occupies both chronologically and materially a central position from which his entire life's work can be understood.'<sup>155</sup> It is not hard to find where in the *Paulus* such claims are based. While scholars of all fields feel pressure to inject their works (usually in the first page or paragraph) with some degree of hyperbole with regard to the dire importance of their topic, the grand opening of Baur's *Paulus* comes off without a bit of affectation:

It is the great task of our time to critically investigate the early history of Christianity—its formation and first development—as it lies before us in the series of documents that make up the

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<sup>152</sup> The full citation is: *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi: Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre: Ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristenthums*, 2 Vols. (Stuttgart: Becher und Müller, 1845; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 Vols. in 1, ed. Eduard Zeller [Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1866-1867]); ET of the original German: *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, 2 Vols., trans., Rev. Allan Menzies, [London: Williams & Norgate, 1875; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. in 1 vol. 1878-1879]; reprinted in 1 Vol. by Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003).

<sup>153</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 27.

<sup>154</sup> Baur, *Paulus*, 1: iii (trans., mine). AD: 'Unter den zahlreichen Schriften, welche Baur der Erforschung des ältesten Christenthums und seiner Urkunden gewidmet hat, ist keine von ihm mit grösserer Liebe gepflegt worden, und keine spiegelt einen längeren Abschnitt seiner wissenschaftlichen Thätigkeit in sich ab, als der Paulus.' This is noted also by Albert Schweitzer (*Paul and His Interpreters* [*supra* note 135], 20), commenting on Baur's labor for the second edition just prior to his death: 'He had resolved that the final results of his study of the Apostle of the Gentiles, with which he had begun his work, and which throughout his whole lifetime had been his favorite study, should be set forth in a new edition of his Paulus. This was to be the crown of his work.'

<sup>155</sup> 'Biblical Classics,' 4.



content of our New Testament canon, a task that can only arise from the innermost focus of the universal interests and movements of our time.<sup>156</sup>

The repeated ‘our time’ (*unserer Zeit*) bespeaks the great *heaviness* that Baur felt on his shoulders as he undertook his research.<sup>157</sup> He recognizes the Enlightenment’s powerful effect upon his task:

It may be just said of the present age that its prevailing tendency is critical, and that its desire is not so much to shape a growing world, as to grasp one already grown and present, in the more important epochs of its development.<sup>158</sup>

He proudly aligns himself with that *Zeitgeist*: ‘The principle efforts of the age in the higher walks of science are critical and historical,’ and speaks of it like his most prized possession: ‘This independence of thought, attained after such great effort—after the painful toil of many centuries...’<sup>159</sup>

But it is precisely here that Baur also separates himself from that hard edge of critical biblical studies to which he has so often been negatively attached. Certainly, he approves Strauss’s ambition and critical method:

The keenness of [Strauss’s] criticism which yet had the principle part of its force in the clearness with which it drew necessary deductions from long granted premises, took the public by surprise, and made a painful impression by the negative character of its results, which it was thought could not be too quickly guarded against by hastily attempted refutations.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Baur, *Paulus*, 1:3 (trans., mine). AD (1:1): ‘Es ist die grosse Aufgabe unserer Zeit, die Urgeschichte des Christenthums, seine Entstehung und erste Entwicklung, wie sie in der Reihe der Schriften, die den Inhalt unsers neutestamentischen Kanons ausmachen, vor uns liegt, kritisch zu erforschen, eine Aufgabe, welche nur aus dem innersten Mittelpunkt der allgemeinsten Interessen und Bewegungen unserer Zeit hervorgehen kann.’ This is the very first sentence of the book.

<sup>157</sup> Unfortunately, Allan Menzies’s ET (*Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ* [*supra* note 152], 1:1) leaves out this interesting usage.

<sup>158</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans., Menzies), 1:1. AD (1:3): ‘Dass die jetztige Zeit ihrer vorherrschenden Richtung nach kritisch ist, nicht sowohl mit productiver Kraft eine erst werdene Welt schaffen, als vielmehr eine schon gewordene und vorhandene in den Momenten ihres Gewordenseins begreifen will, kann gewiss mit Recht von ihr gesagt werden.’

<sup>159</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans., Menzies), 1:2. AD (1:3): ‘Kritisch und historisch sind die allermeisten Bestrebungen der Zeit in den höhern Gebieten der Wissenschaft... Die nach so grosser Anstrengung, nach der mühevollen Arbeit vieler Jahrhunderte errungene Selbständigkeit des Denkens...’

<sup>160</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans., Menzies), 1:2. AD (1:4): ‘Die Schärfe dieser Kritik, die gleichwol ihre Hauptstärke grossentheils nur in der Evidenz hatte, mit welcher sie aus den längst gegebenen Prämissen die nothwendigen Folgerungen zog, hat auf das durch die Negativität des Resultats überraschte Publikum einen peinlichen Eindruck

But he rejects Strauss's radical conclusions. And although he does not here directly engage the man, he is at pains to stress that Strauss's failure to offer anything positive for faith does not entail that his robust critical standpoint is at fault. On the contrary:

What results followed, and what effects were generally produced on the consciousness of the age by this great critical agitation must not here be entered into, but the scientific claim of such a criticism *must not have any doubt thrown on it by any thought of its possible result*. It must be recognized as a decided need in the education of the age, and *all that is said in so many quarters against the work of Strauss can only be of any value as laying down a challenge to us to go still deeper and more thoroughly into the critical process begun by him*.<sup>161</sup>

And Baur sincerely believes the controversy of Strauss's work only highlights the superlative importance of further critical investigations into the life of Jesus and its effects:

The criticism of the Gospel history, so far as it immediately concerns the life of the Founder of Christianity, with which so many weighty questions are allied, *will long remain the most important object of the critical labors of our time (unserer Zeit)*.<sup>162</sup>

This notion of critical, historical New Testament study, done in pursuit of the Founder of Christianity (*der Stifter des Christenthums*), as 'the most important object' of our 'critical labors' (*der wichtigste Gegenstand der kritischen Bestrebungen*) appears to have infused Baur's conception of his own personal labors. Like a man possessed, he rose at 4 AM every morning to begin his studies. In a well-known passage, his colleague and friend Eduard Zeller, who incidentally became his son-in-law as well when he married Emilie Caroline Baur in 1847, said of him:

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gemacht, dessen man sich in den mit aller Eile versuchten Widerlegungen nicht schnell genug erwehren zu können glabute.'

<sup>161</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans., Menzies), 1:2 (italics added). AD (1:4-5): 'Mit welchem Erfolg diess geschehen ist, und welche Wirkungen überhaupt diese grosse kritische Aufregung in dem Bewusstsein der Zeit zurückgelassen hat, mag hier nicht weiter untersucht werden; die wissenschaftliche Berechtigung aber zu einer solchen Kritik konnte bei aller Bedenklichkeit ihrer Resultate nie in Zweifel gezogen werden, sie musste als ein durch die Bildung der Zeit bedingtes Bedürfniss anerkannt werden, und Alles, was von so vielen Seiten gegen das Strass'sche Werk geltend gemacht wurde, konnte nur die Aufforderung nahe legen, in den von ihm einmal begonnenen kritischen Process noch tiefer und gründlicher einzugehen.'

<sup>162</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans., Menzies), 1:3 (italics added). AD (1:5): 'Die Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte wird, da sein unmittelbar das Leben des Stifters des Christenthums betrifft und mit so vielen andern wichtigen Fragen zusammenhängt, noch lange der wichtigste Gegenstand der kritischen Bestrebungen unserer Zeit bleiben.'

Summer and winter he arose at 4:00 A.M., and in winter he customarily worked for several hours in an unheated room out of consideration for the servants, although on especially cold nights the ink froze; and thereafter the regular midday or evening walk was invariably the single long interruption in this scholarly day of work.<sup>163</sup>

Stephen C. Neill, who is by no means an admirer of Baur, has noted:

The works published during his life-time amount to ten thousand pages; those published after his death from his notes or those of his students to another six thousand—the equivalent of a book of four hundred pages every year for forty years.<sup>164</sup>

Immediately after he identifies the historical quest for Jesus as ‘the most important object of the critical labors of our time,’ Baur adds:

In view of the interests of the problem there next follows the historical and critical inquiry into the question how Christianity, so closely interwoven with Judaism, broke loose from it and entered on its sphere of world-wide historical importance. How these bounds were broken through, how Christianity, instead of remaining a mere form of Judaism, although a progressive one, asserted itself as a separate, independent principle, broke loose from it, and took its stand as a new enfranchised form of religious thought and life, essentially different from all the national peculiarities of Judaism is the ultimate, most important point of the primitive history of Christianity.<sup>165</sup>

So the question of Jesus is the centermost issue, but our only access to him is through the religious movement born in his wake. And since Baur is convinced the study of the birth of Christianity is primarily about the Apostle Paul and his role in that story, the *Paulus* comes first:

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<sup>163</sup> ‘Die Tübinger historische Schule,’ in *Vorträge und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag [L.W. Reisland]), 1865: 363 (quoted and translated by Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 33). See also Bruce N. Kaye, ‘Lightfoot and Baur on Early Christianity,’ in *Novum Testamentum* 26 J1 (1984), 197.

<sup>164</sup> *Interpretation of the New Testament* (*supra* note 146), 19.

<sup>165</sup> Baur, *Paul* (trans. Menzies), 1:3. AD (1:5-6): ‘Um die praktische Realisirung der Idee des Christenthums handelte es sich dann erst, als die durch den Tod und die Auferstehung Jesu in die Wirklichkeit des Bewusstseins eingetretene und zu einer lebendigen Macht in demselben gewordene Idee an den Schranken des nationalen Judenthums das Haupthinderniss fand, um zu ihrer weltgeschichtlichen Realität zu gelangen. Wie diese Schranken durchbrochen wurden, wie das Christenthum, statt eine blosse Form des Judenthums zu bleiben und in ihm zuletzt sogar wieder unterzugehen, sich in seinem eigenen selbstständigen Princip erfasste, um sich von ihm loszureissen und als eine neue, von ihm wesentlich verschiedene, von aller nationalen Particularität des Judenthums befreite Form des religiösen Bewusstseins und Leben sich ihm entgegenzustellen, diess ist der weitere wichtigste Punkt der Urgeschichte des Christenthums.’

Here also as in the Gospel history the individuality of a single life is the peculiar object of the historical and critical inquiry. That Christianity, in its universal historical acceptance, was the work of the Apostle Paul is undeniably an historical matter of fact, but in what manner he achieved this, in what light his relations with the elder Apostles must be viewed, whether it was in harmony with them or in contradiction and opposition to them, that he first authoritatively laid down principles and opinions, this it is that deserves a most thorough and accurate inquiry.<sup>166</sup>

This is precisely where Baur has drawn so much fire from those who would say he was not a Christian or who would push him into the most extreme camp of ‘minimalism,’ as though he believed Christianity is a huge historical mistake since Paul is its true founder, not Jesus (much less God). ‘That Christianity, in its universal historical acceptance, was the work of the Apostle Paul is undeniably a matter of fact.’<sup>167</sup> In his oft-cited study on the history of the ‘Jesus-Paul debate,’ Victor Paul Furnish credits Baur with being the first to see and address the centrality of the issue for all New Testament, Christian origins, and Christian theology studies,<sup>168</sup> and perhaps not surprisingly, assigns Baur to the limited, ‘radical’ extreme of minimalism, together with only Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>169</sup> Quoting from Baur’s *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* of 1853, he says Baur ‘raised the question of “how the apostle Paul appears in his Epistles to be so indifferent to the historical facts of the life of Jesus,” and that he answered by saying Paul’s “whole Christian consciousness is transformed into a view of the person of Jesus which stands in need of no history to elucidate it.”’<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:3-4. AD (1:6): ‘Auch hier ist, wie in der evangelischen Geschichte, die Einheit eines individuellen Lebens der eigentliche Gegenstand der historisch-kritischen Betrachtung. Dass das Christenthum, was es seiner universellen historischen Bedeutung nach ist, erst durch den Apostel Paulus geworden ist, ist unläugbare historische Thatsache; auf welche Weise diess aber von ihm geschehen ist, wie dabei sein Verhältniss zu den andern ältern Aposteln gedacht werden muss, ob er in Übereinstimmung mit ihnen, oder in Widerspruch und Gegensatz gegen sie, die von ihm zuerst geltend gemachten Ansichten und Grundsätze durchführte, diess ist es, was immer noch einer genauern und durchgreifendern Untersuchung bedarf.’

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>168</sup> ‘The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann,’ in A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 37 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989): 17.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Nietzsche’s treatment of the issue can be found in his *Der Antichrist: Versuch einer Kritik des Christenthums*, Gesamte Ausgabe in Grossoktav, Vol. VIII (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1895; reprinted in *Gesammelte Werke, Musarionausgabe*, Vol. 17 [München: Musarion Verlag, 1926]: 169-261; ET: ‘The Antichrist,’ in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans., Walter Kaufmann, The Viking Portable Library [New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976]: 565-656).

But Furnish's interpretation of Baur (as well as that of Nietzsche) is subject to criticism. It is true that Baur sees Paul as relatively unconcerned with the historical Jesus as indicated in the quotation above, but Baur certainly does *not* belong in any category wherein Paul is identified as the founder of Christianity or where Jesus is thought to have held no Messianic intentions. Baur offers numerous proofs to the effect that Jesus certainly did have such aims and repeatedly calls Jesus 'the Founder' of Christianity.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, he believes it was Jesus' own conception of himself as Messiah, set against pre-existing views within Israel of the Messiah's role, that constituted a break with the religion of his fathers:

The most unequivocal proof, however, of Jesus' belief in himself as the Messiah is furnished by his appearance at Jerusalem... Such a momentous step can only have proceeded from the conviction that it was absolutely necessary for his cause, now ripe for decision, to be at once decided...

...Up to this time there was always a possibility that he and the people might come to agree on the ground of the Messianic faith: the people might acknowledge him to be the person to whose advent the national expectations pointed; the disagreement between his idea of the Messiah and Jewish Messianic faith might still be peaceably adjusted. But his death made a complete and irreparable breach between him and Judaism.<sup>172</sup>

Rather than the idea that Jesus was an ordinary Jew whose followers then created a new religious movement centered on him contrary to his own aims, Baur is certain it was Jesus' conceived 'kingdom of God' *vis-à-vis* a renewed 'kingdom of Israel' that led to his conflict with Palestinian Jews. But there is more to Baur's analysis, and it is here that he is sometimes (mistakenly) identified as a champion of the

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<sup>170</sup> Furnish, 'The Jesus-Paul Debate,' 18. Furnish cites Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (Geschichte der christlichen Kirche, Vol. 1; Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1853; ET of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, trans., Rev. Allan Menzies, 2 vols. [London/Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1878]), 1:49-50.

<sup>171</sup> For example, see his *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:38-41. One example of his identification of Jesus as 'the Founder' of Christianity can be seen in the above quote, where he calls Jesus 'der Stifter des Christenthums.' See also Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 221-223.

<sup>172</sup> *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:41-42. AD (1:38-39): 'Den unzweideutigsten Beweiss seines messianischen Bewusstseins gibt jedoch, auch abgesehen von der Scene des Einzugs, sein Auftreten in Jerusalem. ...so kann dieser so folgenreiche Schritt nur aus der Ueberzeugung der Nothwendigkeit hervorgegangen sein, dass seine zur Entscheidung reife Sache sich jetzt auch wirklich entscheiden müsse... ...War bisher noch die Möglichkeit vorhanden, dass der Glaube an den Messias das vermittelnde Band zwischen ihm und dem Volke wurde, das Volk ihn als den anerkannte, welcher als der Gegenstand der nationalen Erwartung kommen sollte, und der Widerspruch zwischen seiner Messiasidee und dem jüdischen Messiasglauben auf friedlichem Wege sich ausglich, so war jetzt sein Tod der vollendete Bruch zwischen ihm und dem Judenthum.'

minimalist position. He observes in the New Testament that whereas Jesus represents a point of departure from Judaism, the disciples, who became apostles when Jesus gave to them the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), were content to remain in Jerusalem, worshipping at the Temple, apparently not ready to make Jesus' leap. Hence Baur is no minimalist. Jesus did indeed envision a new world with a new way of being religious; it was the disciples who wanted to remain under the umbrella of Judaism. It is the exact opposite of the 'minimalist' position.

His death made a complete and irreparable breach between him and Judaism. A death like his made it impossible for the Jew, as long as he remained a Jew, to believe in him as his Messiah... A Messiah who died, and by his death put an end to all that the Jew expected his Messiah to accomplish... Nothing but the miracle of the resurrection could disperse these doubts which threatened to drive away the faith of the disciples after its object into the eternal night of death...

Great, however, as was the importance of this fact, and certain as it seemed to bring the minds of the disciples who believed in Jesus into direct conflict with Judaism, the idea was still too narrow to accomplish much... As the first disciples conceived that the very next step after the departure of the Lord from the earth was to be his second coming which was to be the consummation of the whole of the world's history, their faith in the risen one was simply a new and stronger form of the old Messianic expectations. Had no new development taken place, the only difference between the believing disciples and their unbelieving fellow-countrymen would have been that to the former the Messiah would have been one who had come already, and to the latter one who was still to come...<sup>173</sup>

And this is precisely where Paul comes in. It is not that he is the founder of Christianity, but the founder of Gentile Christian communities. Baur even believes Paul understood Jesus' implications better than the original disciples *before* his conversion. Supposedly, that is what fueled his hatred of the Jesus-movement among Jews in Palestine. The implications of a crucified Messiah were not in the best interest of a would-be kingdom of Israel, and if that one was raised by God from the dead then those implications would soon

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:42-43. AD (1:39-40): '...so war jetzt sein Tod der vollendete Bruch zwischen ihm und dem Judenthum. Ein Tod, wie der seinige, machte es für den Juden, so lange er Jude blieb, zur Unmöglichkeit, an ihn als seinen Messias zu glauben... ..ein Messias, dessen Tod alles vernichtete, was der Jude von seinem Messias hoffte...wie der Messias des jüdischen Nationalglaubens... Nur das Wunder der Auferstehung konnte die Zweifel zerstreuen, welche den Glauben selbst in die ewige Nacht des Todes verstossen zu müssen schienen... So gross aber die Bedeutung dieser Thatsache ist, und, so sehr es schon durch sie im Bewusstsein der an Jesus glaubenden Jünger zum entschiedenen Bruch mit dem Judenthum kommen zu müssen schien... Je enger in der Anschauung der ersten Jünger die den ganzen Weltlauf in sich abschliessende Wiederkunft des Herrn an seines Hingang von der Erde sich anschloss, um so mehr hätten auch in dem Glauben an den Auferstandenen nur die alten messianischen Hoffnungen sich erneuert und befestigt, und es wäre zwischen den glaubigen Jüngern und den unglaubigen Volksgenossen nur der Unterschied gewesen, dass die Einen in dem kommenden den schon dagewesenen, die Andern den jetzt erst erwarteten erblickt hätten.'

be realities. Thus his own testimony is that he persecuted those Jews who believed in Jesus (i.e. not just anyone who believed) out of his zeal for the ancestral traditions (Gal. 1:13-14; cf. Acts 9:1-2). Hence Paul's response to the Damascus Road experience—i.e. his apostleship to the Gentiles—became a point of great contention among the 'pillar apostles' of Jerusalem (James and Peter in particular), as he did not require circumcision of his Gentile believers, which would have been tantamount to conversion to Judaism. The implication of this was that the Jesus-movement to which the Gentiles were committing themselves was indeed something different than Judaism. Paul's Gentile believers are converts in every sense of the word—but not to Judaism; to Christianity. This differentiation between Paul's gospel and that of the 'pillar apostles' is what Baur refers to repeatedly as 'Paulinism'; the word does not mean a religion begun by Paul, who is therefore the founder of our 'Christianity.' Only in this limited sense could Paul in Baur be called the architect of the Christian religion and Baur a fellow-minimalist with Nietzsche.<sup>174</sup>

The history of the development of Christianity dates of course from the departure of Jesus from the world. But in Paul this history has a new beginning...

...In speaking of the period immediately preceding the great turning-point in his life, [Paul] says that he was a great zealot for the traditions of his fathers, and that he went beyond many of his contemporaries in the Jewish religion. The reason for this must have been simply that he saw more clearly than many others how completely the new doctrine would undermine Judaism if it prevailed... Thus it arose out of the natural logic of his character that as when a Jew he had thrown all the vigor of his intellect into the persecution of Christianity, so when converted to Christ he should become the most trenchant opponent of the very principle of Judaism.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> In reality, Nietzsche himself was no traditional 'minimalist.' He would also strongly disagree with the notion that Jesus was happy to remain within the parameters of Judaism. He does believe Jesus' followers—in particular Paul—betrayed his vision when they formulated the hierarchical religion that became Christianity, but not because Jesus had no such ambition. For Nietzsche, the primary importance of Jesus is his rejection of all hierarchical religion, especially Judaism, as a medium between mankind and God. I.e. Jesus was not merely initiating a new religion, but changing the way we go about religion. See his *Antichrist* (*supra* note 169).

<sup>175</sup> *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:46. AD (1:44): 'In Paulus hat die nach dem Hingang Jesu beginnende Entwicklungsgeschichte des Christenthums einen neuen Anfangspunkt, von welchem aus wir sie nicht blos in ihrem äussern, sondern auch innern Zusammenhang verfolgen können... War er, wie er selbst sagt (Gal. 1,14), noch unmittelbar vor dem grossen Wendepunkt seines Lebens ein so strenger Eiferer für die Ueberlieferungen der Väter, dass er es so vielen seiner Altersgenossen im Judenthum zuvorthat, so kann diess nur darin seinen Grund gehabt haben, dass er tiefer als so viele Andere die das Judenthum untergrabende Tendenz der neuen Lehre erkannte... Es war daher auch nur die natürliche Consequenz seines Wesens, dass er mit derselben Schärfe des Geistes, mit welcher er als Jude das Christenthum verfolgte, als Christ der principiellste Gegner des Judenthums wurde.'

In retrospect it seems that instead of an assailant of Christianity, Baur saw himself as its defender. He saw in Paul the true implementation of Jesus' 'good news' that God was reordering the world, and in Peter a great betrayal of all that Jesus intended. Based on his own statements I believe he identified himself with Paul's great burden of single-handedly making known to the world just what God had done in time through Jesus. It is astounding to me that Baur's *Paulus* includes on the first blank page, before the work begins, a tiny printing of an isolated sentence clause from 1 Cor. 15:10, which encapsulates so well what must have been Paul's own battle-cry within himself as he sought to carry the whole Gentile world on his shoulders with no help from the 'pillar apostles' in Jerusalem: Περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα ('I worked much more than all of them'). I do not think Baur merely intended this to capture the essence of Paul, the subject of the monograph, because in Paul the primary emphasis falls upon the remainder: οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ σὺν ἐμοί ('but it was not I; rather, the grace of God that is with me'). I believe Baur thought himself a man on a mission, possibly even a divine calling.

The *Paulus* as a whole provides an exhaustive presentation and defense of those ideas so central to all his previous work on Paul and the early church. The work is divided into three sections: the life and works of Paul (*Leben und Wirken*), his epistles (*die Briefe*), and his doctrine (*der Lehrbegriff*).

As to Paul's *Leben und Wirken*, Baur takes up the line begun by Matthias Schneckenberger, claiming that the Acts of the Apostles was written after the time of the apostles, with the apologetic aim (*der Zweck*) of defending the reputation and accomplishments of the Apostle Paul and smoothing over the rough spots known to have existed in the early church, primarily the intra-apostolic conflict so prevalent in Galatians and 1 Corinthians. He does this chiefly by presenting Peter and Paul as similar as possible with little or no conflict. Peter receives the narrator's attention in chaps. 1-12 and is the one who received a vision from the Risen Jesus to take the gospel to the Gentiles, while Paul is the focus of chaps. 13-28 and is non-confrontational among the apostles, making many concessions to the Judaizing faction (cf. Acts 16:3). The Jerusalem Council (chap. 15) is depicted as having settled the dispute over Gentile circumcision and makes no mention whatsoever of the subsequent incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-16). Since the Epistles of Paul paint the opposite picture, Baur believes the historian must choose one or the



other for historical constructions of Paul and early Christianity. Due to the supposed late date and obvious agenda of the Acts, Baur prefers Paul's own testimony. But this does not make the Acts worthless (nor Paul perfectly trustworthy). Baur still devotes a great deal of time to it, always using the Epistles as its filter.

He assigns particular importance to the way the Acts reveals generalities concerning the situation of the church in the late Apostolic Age. These crystallize around three feature episodes of the story: the alleged conflict in the very early church (even before Paul's conversion) between the so-called Hebrews and Hellenists (Acts 6:1ff), the outbreak of persecution against believers in Jerusalem on the part of the non-believing Jews (Acts 8:1; 11:13; etc), and the speech and stoning of Stephen ('der Vorgänger des Apostels Paulus') (Acts 6:8 – 7:60).

In the *zweite Theil* he continues to delineate authentic from inauthentic New Testament material. He returns to the earlier argument against those so-called 'pastoral Epistles,' and conversely attributes sure authenticity to those Epistles wherein can be seen the controversy surrounding Paul's Torah-free mission to the Gentiles *vis-à-vis* the Judaizing efforts of the Jerusalem apostles: namely Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans. Then he introduces a third category of Epistles, which are neither surely authentic or inauthentic, but debatable: 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. He offers extensive discussions of each Epistle, including respective points of historical context, theological content, and unique importance.

The *dritte Theil* offers a lengthy treatment of various aspects of Paul's theology, particularly justification, the church as the body of Christ, and the relation of Christianity to Judaism and paganism. The section is complimented by some appendices, including a detailed comparison of Paul's doctrine of justification to that found in the Epistle of James.

The whole Peter-Paul controversy is again addressed in the *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, but here Baur's focus is broadened to include its long-term effects and overall significance in church history, the first of a five-volume work on all church history. Morgan's helpful summary calls it the 'classic formulation of the thesis that primitive Christianity is to be understood primarily in terms of

an early opposition between Jewish and Gentile Christianity being gradually softened until the symbiosis was complete in the Catholic Church of the late second century.’<sup>176</sup> The treatment in this volume has become the standard, reference material for those interested in Baur’s church history.

Certainly, there are many more issues involved in the identification of Baur as a Christian in counter-distinction to D.F. Strauss, such as Baur’s role in the seminary as its morning preacher, his agenda in theological study, and the contrasting legacies left behind by Baur and Strauss (evidenced by their starkly different funerals). And so it will be these issues that receive my attention in the sections that follow, beginning in Chapter 3 with the reception of Baur in memory and the secondary literature (Was he a sincere seeker of truth or a heretic bent on destroying the faith? What do the experts say?), as well as the goals and overall meaning of Baur’s historical theology in Chapter 4 (Was it an adaptation of a pantheistic, pagan philosophical system devoid of divine reality or an earnest pursuit of true knowledge of God?). It will be in these sections that I will engage some of the other important works of Baur that have yet gone unmentioned. But at this point I think there is every reason to believe (at least) that Baur thought of himself as a Christian, even if few others did, and that it will require a closer examination of the goals and method of his historical theology to say more clearly in what sense he may be called a Christian by us today, if at all, as well as to better evaluate whether or not we ourselves might have been called a Christian by him.

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<sup>176</sup> ‘Biblical Classics,’ 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RECEPTION OF BAUR IN BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

At the risk of importing the Hegelian dialectic into my own treatment of F.C. Baur, I will say it seems that at this stage in critical biblical studies, many topics of study have given birth in their respective secondary literatures to numerous new topics, and in some cases, the story of the secondary literature has become a topic in itself. This is certainly true in the case of the reception of Baur in biblical and theological studies. Klaus Penzel made note of this as early as 1968. After reading the two monographs on Baur that were written in that decade, by Wolfgang Geiger (1964) and Peter C. Hodgson (1966),<sup>1</sup> Penzel noted their starkly contrasting pictures of Baur. He opined that Geiger's account is highly critical, suggesting Baur was not a Christian, but an atheist, while Hodgson's work is largely apologetic, arguing that Baur was a devoted Christian.<sup>2</sup> In Penzel's judgment, this ironically provides 'confirmation of Hegel's point that truth develops only through conflicts.'<sup>3</sup> In this Chapter I want to discuss these polarized accounts of Baur's life and the underlying issues of interest to scholars in their judgment of him. In the end it will become clear that the most important point is the question of Baur's historical-theological method and its relation to the historiography of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and I will give my attention to that in Chapter 4.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Geiger, *Spekulation und Kritik: Die Geschichtstheologie Ferdinand Christian Baur's* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1964); Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur, Makers of Modern Theology* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see my pp. 72-73 below.

<sup>3</sup> Klaus Penzel, 'Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur Please Stand Up?' in *Journal of Religion* 48 no 3 JI (1968), 321.

From the *Tübinger Schule* to the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* and Beyond

The effect of Baur upon these recent interpreters (Geiger and Hodgson) functions like a microcosm of the whole story of Baur's reception, beginning with that in his own lifetime. We have seen in Chapter 2 that he served as the morning preacher of the Tübingen university seminary, and we know that he spent his life laboring over the New Testament texts and the questions of theology, presumably because they *mattered* to him. As to the merit of his scholarship and its historical importance, William Baird calls Baur simply 'the most important New Testament scholar of his time.'<sup>4</sup> Craig C. Hill explains that Baur's history of the early church 'succeeded in setting the agenda for much of subsequent New Testament scholarship,' and labors to demonstrate how Baur's views have dominated historical discussions of church origins to the present time.<sup>5</sup> Horton Harris declares 'all modern exegesis and interpretation of the Bible find their roots and origins in [Baur's] Tübingen School.'<sup>6</sup>

But in his own life and since then Baur has also been reviled by many leading Christian thinkers and scholars. Not long after his prize-pupil's greatest work—David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (1835)—was called 'der Ischariotismus unsere Tage,' another student of his, Albert Schweigler, wrote from Berlin to Eduard Zeller on October 3, 1841, describing the reputation of Baur among the theologians there like this:

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<sup>4</sup> *History of New Testament Research*, Vol. 1: From Deism to Tübingen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 259. Klaus Penzel ('Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur,' 311, 314) claims that Baur 'was the greatest theologian and scholar between Schleiermacher and Ritschl' and that he 'has always excited scholarly interest.' Avery Robert Dulles (Review of Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, in *Theological Studies* 28 no 1 Mr, 141) calls attention to the fact that Baur was 'regarded by [Wilhelm] Dilthey as the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century.' Frédéric Auguste Lichtenberger (*History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. and trans., W. Hastie [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd., 1889], 379) calls Baur 'one of the most imminent representatives of the intellectual nobility of Germany.' Hodgson (*Formation of Historical Theology*, 206) says the great Emanuel Hirsch in 1954 called Baur 'the greatest and at the same time the most controversial theologian to be produced by German evangelical Christianity since Schleiermacher' (trans., Hodgson; he cites Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie im Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des europäischen Denkens*, Vol. V [Gutersloh: C. Bertelmanns Verlag, 1954], 518).

<sup>5</sup> *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 8; see also his pp. 1-17.

<sup>6</sup> *Tübingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation into the School of F.C. Baur* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), xvii. He adds (1) that 'no single event ever changed the course of Biblical scholarship as much as the appearance of the Tübingen School. All New Testament criticism and, derivatively, much Old Testament criticism from the mid-nineteenth century onwards finds its origin, consciously or unconsciously, in this School.'

Apart from the Hegelians there is absolutely no theologian I can approach, for among the orthodox party there reigns a boundless animosity against Tübingen. Dr. Baur is the *bête noire* of the pietists here, hated even more than Strauss. Whoever comes here from Tübingen is *a priori* looked upon as an unbeliever unless he legitimizes himself by outbreaks of hatred against heresy...<sup>7</sup>

Martin Hengel corroborates that picture with a traditional story of Baur lecturing on the New Testament book of Revelation, arriving at the number of the Beast 666 and quipping to a student, ‘As Hengstenberg (the spokesman of conservative Lutheranism) says in Berlin, that’s me.’<sup>8</sup> He also points out that in the short story of the Antichrist by the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1853 – 1900), published in 1900, the main character—the Antichrist himself—hosts an ecumenical council in Jerusalem at which he proudly announces that he has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Tübingen!<sup>9</sup>

But while theologians in Berlin hated Baur even more than Strauss, J.C. O’Neill describes the very different funeral ceremonies the two men inspired. Strauss had ‘expressly forbidden the ringing of church bells, and had directed that no minister of the church should speak at his grave,’ but Baur’s funeral was given ‘with full church ceremonies and a number of memorial meetings,’ as well as a speech by Baur’s pupil, Louis Georgii, extolling Baur for having been such an ‘influence for blessing’ ‘in the church as a preacher of the gospel.’<sup>10</sup>

This portrait of Baur underscores the polarizing effect the man had on Christianity and the study of the Bible in his generation, identified by Richard I. Pervo as ‘one of the most exciting periods in the history of scholarship.’<sup>11</sup> But despite the intrigue of all this, Baur has suffered a surprising degree of

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<sup>7</sup> Excerpt provided and translated by Horton Harris, *Tübingen School* (*supra* note 6), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Hengel, ‘Bishop Lightfoot and the Tübingen School on the Gospel of John and the Second Century,’ in James D.G. Dunn (ed.), *The Lightfoot Centenary Lectures* in *The Durham University Journal* (Jan 1992), 23-24 (see his p. 44, note 4). Hengel’s quote is provided by a former teacher of his, Otto Bauernfeind, whose teacher E. von der Goltz was the grandson of a former student of Baur himself.

<sup>9</sup> See Vladimir Soloviev, ‘A Short Tale of the Antichrist,’ in his *Politics, Law, and Morality: Essays by V.S. Soloviev*, Russian Literature and Thought, ed. and trans. Vladimir Wozniuk (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 264-289. See Hengel, ‘Bishop Lightfoot and the Tübingen School,’ 23.

<sup>10</sup> ‘F.C. Baur,’ in *The Bible’s Authority: A Portrait Gallery of Thinkers from Lessing to Bultmann* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1991), 117.

obscurity in subsequent study. Even though Klaus Scholder can say that Baur's 'development of historical-critical theology is without doubt one of the most important events in the history of modern theology,'<sup>12</sup> and Joseph Fitzner that 'Baur himself was and remains a nineteenth-century theologian of first-rank importance,'<sup>13</sup> it is unfortunate that so little secondary literature has been produced concerning him. Hodgson calls Baur a 'strangely neglected man,'<sup>14</sup> and Bruce N. Kaye laments that 'Baur's reputation in English scholarship' 'is not high now nor has it really ever been.'<sup>15</sup> The truth is that I have been able to locate fourteen monographs written that are directly concerned with Baur and/or the Tübingen School. But only nine of these have been published in the last ninety-nine years. Of these, only three are available in English.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, I have noted above the complex problem created by the contradictory reports of some of the more important monographs, to be discussed further below. As for articles, there are a great many more, but not nearly as many as we might like. And again, the majority of what has been written is more than a century old, quite inaccessible to the majority of scholars today, and virtually all of that is also non-English. Another unfortunate fact about the secondary literature, whether old or new, German or English, is that the majority of it has been written only by small number of scholars. Without the contributions of Eduard Zeller (d. 1908), Gerhard Uhlhorn (d. 1901), Ernst Barnikol (d. 1968), Peter C. Hodgson, Ulrich Köpf, and Klaus Scholder, the size of the available secondary sources would be severely reduced.

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<sup>11</sup> Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Anglican Theological Review* 60 no 2 Apr (1978), 222.

<sup>12</sup> *The Birth of Modern Critical Theology: Origins and Problems of Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century*, trans., John Bowden (London/ Philadelphia, PA: SCP Press/ Trinity Press International, 1990), 1. It is on pp. 143-144 of that work that Baur is most clearly identified as 'the founder of historical-critical theology in the modern sense.'

<sup>13</sup> Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Journal of Religion* 57 no 1 Ja (1977), 95.

<sup>14</sup> 'The Rediscovery of Ferdinand Christian Baur: A Review of the First Two Volumes of his *Ausgewählte Werke*,' in *Church History* 33 Je (1964), 206.

<sup>15</sup> 'Lightfoot and Baur on Early Christianity,' in *Novum Testamentum* 26 JI (1984), 193.

<sup>16</sup> See the references to Hodgson and Harris in my Bibliography.

Some have speculated on the reasons why Baur has failed to inspire more direct study. There is broad agreement that not nearly enough of Baur's works have been translated into English,<sup>17</sup> and we might add that only very few of his works have been made available in modern editions, even untranslated. As well, most believe Baur's negative associations with the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,<sup>18</sup> along with the changing emphases of theology on the European continent from 'liberal' to 'neo-orthodox' and 'dialectical' following the turn of the twentieth century, further obviated his importance.

The truth is that interest in Baur quickly waned and that his fame was soon eclipsed—partly because...Baur had become so closely identified with Hegel's philosophy that he was made to share in Hegel's fate after 1850, to fall into disrepute, and to suffer general neglect; partly because, with the rise of neo-orthodoxy in our own century, he was at first condemned, almost out of hand, as was his whole century, for his theological 'liberalism.'<sup>19</sup>

Even before the rise of the dialectical and neo-orthodox emphases in German theology, thanks to Karl Barth (1886 – 1968) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884 – 1976) respectively, there was the so-called History of Religions School (*die religionsgeschichtliche Schule*). This school of thought took its roots in Baur. As its name suggests, it was primarily concerned with the importance of history within the discipline of theology. But it represented a shift from the *Kirchengeschichte* of Baur and the Tübingen School to a broader emphasis on the place of *Kirchengeschichte* within *Religionsgeschichte*. The school is marked by the clustered promotion of certain, relatively likeminded historical-theologians to full professorship predominantly at the University of Göttingen in the latter nineteenth century, in particular Albert Eichhorn (1886), Hermann Gunkel (1888), Johannes Weiss (1888), Wilhelm Bousset (1890), Alfred Rhalfs (1891), Ernst Troeltsch (1891), William Wrede (1891), Heinrich Hackmann (1893), and then later

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. see John Macquarrie, Review of Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, in *Interpretation* 21 no 2 Apr (1967), 194; Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, xi, 6, 8; John Bowden, Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Theology* 78 no 666 D, 654; Kaye, 'Lightfoot and Baur,' 193.

<sup>18</sup> See Hodgson, 'Rediscovery,' 206; Jaroslav Pelikan, 'Editor's Preface,' in Hodgson's *Formation of Historical Theology*, x; Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 1-4; Dulles, Review (*supra* note 4), 141-142; Macquarrie, Review (*supra* note 17), 194; Bowden, Review (*supra* note 17), 654.

<sup>19</sup> Penzel, 'Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur,' 314.

Rudolf Otto (1898), Hugo Greßmann (1902), and Wilhelm Heitmüller (1902). The school initially took inspiration from Albrecht Ritschl, who had been a member of the Tübingen School but then came to disagree sharply with Baur. Soon after they explicitly denounced the ideas of Ritschl and effectively represent a development in theology well enough separated from Baur and his Tübingen School as to have replaced them, though consciously building upon their historical-critical gains.

Kaye also believes scholars have been less interested in Baur as they might have been as a result of the work of the Bishop of Durham J.B. Lightfoot (1828 – 1889),<sup>20</sup> who is thought by many to have soundly refuted and eliminated most of that trademark view of early church history associated with Baur and the Tübingen School, wherein the earliest church is divided over Judaizing Christianity and Paulinism, a conflict that reaches into the second century and plays out in the differing Gospels, only to arrive at a synthesis in the late second century when it gave birth to those conciliatory, ‘catholic’ Epistles.

It is commonly said that Lightfoot set out to rebut the position of Baur and the Tübingen School generally by settling the question of the dating of the Apostolic Fathers and in particular the Ignatian Epistles. By doing this he was able to show that the New Testament documents, which must surely have preceded these Apostolic Fathers, had to be all dated in the first century.<sup>21</sup>

Stephen C. Neill is unreserved in his judgment of the fatal effects of Lightfoot’s work upon the legacy of Baur. He represents a very predominant outlook:

Zahn and Lightfoot had done their work. They had identified the precise point at which the Tübingen theories were most open to attack; if the attack was successful here, the champions of the Tübingen theories would have no power to defend themselves elsewhere. The theories had been killed stone dead.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Lightfoot and Baur,’ 193. See Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp*, Part II: *Ignatius and Polycarp*, 3 Vols. (London: Macmillan, 1889; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1989) and Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochen* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1873). See also my pp. 68-71 below for more on Lightfoot.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>22</sup> *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961* (London/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964), 55. These lines are also cited by Kaye, ‘Lightfoot and Baur,’ 193.



The consequences of all these factors are that Baur and the importance of his research have either become largely forgotten, underestimated, or worse, labeled irrelevant and obsolete and thus (simply) dismissed by many.<sup>23</sup> The crueler extreme of this has been that the stereotype of Baur as a disciple of Hegel ‘has become so absolutized that it has been made into a caricature.’<sup>24</sup> This has only become a vicious cycle, whereby Baur has been marginalized further and further.

That brings us to the most common and important reason for the relative neglect Baur has received, from the days of the *Tübinger Schule* to the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* and beyond, namely the criticism that he first of all dove headlong into Hegelian speculative philosophy and then made havoc of early church history in his mission to confirm those preconceptions. By ‘dove headlong,’ I mean more than that he merely shared many ideas with Hegel or that he identified himself as an admirer of the philosopher, which even Baur’s greatest supporters concede. His detractors allege that he ‘was affected to his hurt by the Hegelian bias,’<sup>25</sup> so much so that he was not only ‘a young disciple of Hegel,’<sup>26</sup> but that he can be described as one in a trance or intoxicated by Hegelianism: he ‘lived in a German intellectual atmosphere permeated with Hegelian thought’<sup>27</sup> and ‘fell deeply under its sway.’<sup>28</sup> E. Earle Ellis even describes this in terms of a literal conversion *away* from the God of Abraham, ‘to the gods of the philosophers.’<sup>29</sup> And by ‘made havoc,’ I mean it is claimed that based upon his alleged conversion and utter devotion to Hegel, Baur’s investigation of church history was for him the means by which he would

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<sup>23</sup> Noted by Pelikan, ‘Editor’s Preface’ (*supra* note 18), x; Dulles, Review (*supra* note 4), 141-142; Macquarrie, Review (*supra* note 17), 194; Penzel, ‘Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur,’ 314; Bowden, Review (*supra* note 17), 654.

<sup>24</sup> Macquarrie, Review (*supra* note 17), 194.

<sup>25</sup> George Park Fisher, *History of the Christian Church* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 626.

<sup>26</sup> F.H. Bradley, *The Presuppositions of Critical History*, ed., Lionel Rubinoff (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 2.

<sup>27</sup> E. Earle Ellis, in his ‘Foreword’ to Harris, *Tübingen School*, xi.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen C. Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> See his ‘Foreword’ (*supra* note 27), x.

prove Hegelianism correct and thus he manipulated the texts of the New Testament and other early Christian literature in order to prove his forgone conclusions about early Christianity.<sup>30</sup> He resolutely ignored clear textual indications that his Hegelian historical theories were flawed, and imposed upon the texts evidence that was not there to be found.<sup>31</sup> ‘Once Baur had formulated his essential conception of Christian origins, no amount of evidence could shake him from his conclusions.’<sup>32</sup> Allusions to a ‘Procrustean bed’ of Hegelianism are virtually predictable talking points in many of the older textbook

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<sup>30</sup> One among many examples is Bradley (*Presuppositions of Critical History* [*supra* note 26], 2): ‘Baur...had revolutionized biblical exegesis by attempting, in the name of fidelity to fact, to apply the Hegelian laws of historical development to the interpretation of scripture,’ as though Baur saturated himself with Hegelian historical method and *then* started publishing exegetical works with the explicit goal of proving Hegel.

<sup>31</sup> For a sample of the many older examples of all this, see Frédéric Auguste Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology* (*supra* note 4), 380, 388; Andrew M. Fairbairn, ‘Literary Criticism—The Tübingen School,’ in his *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1893; reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2006), 261-263, 268-269, 273; J. Haussleiter, ‘Baur, Ferdinand Christian, and the Later Tübingen School,’ in Samuel Macauley (ed.), *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. II (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls, 1908), 8; Gustav Fraedrich, *Ferdinand Christian Baur: der Begründer der Tübinger Schule als Theologe, Schriftsteller und Charakter* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1909), 99-100, *et al*; John Theodore Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. III (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1912), 171; Albert Schweitzer, *Die Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1912; ET: *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery [New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1951], 14-16, 21; George Park Fisher, *History of the Christian Church* (*supra* note 25), 626; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1918), 536. For some more recent examples, see Ernst Barnikol, ‘Das ideengeschichtliche Erbe Hegels bei und seit Strauss und Baur im 19. Jahrhundert,’ in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche X: I (1961), 281-328; Wolfgang Geiger, *Spekulation und Kritik*, 108, *et al*; Stephen C. Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 21-32, 41; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed., trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 31; Graydon F. Snyder, *First Corinthians: A Faith Community Commentary* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992), 252; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1 (London: SPCK/ Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1992), 108-109, 342-344; Alan F. Johnson and Robert E. Webber, *What Christians Believe: An Overview of Theology and Its Biblical and Historical Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 50; John K. Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 2-3, 31; Peter Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Justify the Enterprise* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1998), 25, 52; Clinton Bennett, *In Search of Jesus: Insider and Outsider Images* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2001), 106; David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., T&T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (London: T&T Clark, Ltd., 2006), 17. See also the sources noted by Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 2 and notes 4 and 5. See also my description of Harris’s *Tübingen School* on pp. 73-83 below.

<sup>32</sup> W. Ward Gasque, Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Christianity Today* 20 JI 2 (1976), 33 [1041].

treatments.<sup>33</sup> (This is in fact one place where Baur is sometimes called un-Christian, because Hegel's speculative historiography is thought a highly pagan, pantheistic ideology.)

Thus Baur's alleged Hegelianism in general is credited by his opponents with numerous flaws in particular, which all require special consideration. Taking them one at a time they are: (1) that he started first of all with Hegel and only subsequently set out to prove the Hegelian dialectical idealism in the history of the church based on the New Testament; (2) that this agenda led him to gross oversimplifications of the data to suit the unyielding, simplistic demands of the Hegelian sequence 'thesis, antithesis, synthesis'; (3) that he ignored all evidence to the contrary of his preconceived theory and misappropriated what evidence he acknowledged; and (4) that his mission all along was to dethrone Christianity as the predominant worldview and to replace it with a non-Christian, Hegelian view entrenched in skepticism and paganism.

Underlying these issues, however, is the assumption (though it is sometimes explicit) that Baur's greatest crime is an improper mixing of theology, philosophy, and history (to the detriment of all three), hence the oft-quoted line from the preface to the *Symbolik und Mythologie*: 'Without philosophy, history always remains to me dead and mute,'<sup>34</sup> cited with a judgmental tone and taken in many cases as reason enough to rule him out not only as a historian but also as a legitimate exegete of scripture.<sup>35</sup> But on both

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<sup>33</sup> E.g. see George H. Schodde, 'Movements Critical and Ethical,' in William D. Grant (ed.), *Christendom Anno Domini MDCCCCI*, Vol. II (New York, NY: Chauncey Holt, 1902), 164; Parke Poindexter Flournoy, *New Light on the New Testament: An Account of Some Interesting Discoveries* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1903), 64; Haussleiter, 'Baur' (*supra* note 31), 8; James Westfall Thompson and Bernard J. Holm, *A History of Historical Writing*. Vol. II: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1942; reprint 1967), 584; Morton Scott Enslin, 'Tübingen School,' in Vergilius Ture Anselm Ferm (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Religion* (Paterson, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1964), 797. This is observed also by Pelikan, 'Editor's Preface' (*supra* note 18), x.

<sup>34</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Symbolik und Mythologie, oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler): xi. AD: 'Ohne Philosophie bleibt mir die Geschichte ewig tot und stumm.'

<sup>35</sup> This is observed by Pelikan, 'Editor's Preface' (*supra* note 18), x. At least a couple examples of this claim that Baur was not and should not be considered an exegete can be found in Ellis, 'Foreword,' xiii-xv, and Geiger, *Spekulation und Kritik*, 234 (cited by Ellis). After his claim that Baur was not an exegete of Scripture, Ellis himself makes an unsupported claim that every New Testament Epistle with Paul's name on it is in fact authentic and that all New Testament texts were written before 70 CE!

counts it looks too often like a veiled attempt to overstep his unorthodox views of early Church history.<sup>36</sup> George Howard in fact claims ‘modern Pauline studies began with the Tübingen scholar, F.C. Baur.’<sup>37</sup> Francis Watson has asserted ‘Baur was the first great exponent of the study of Paul by historical methods.’<sup>38</sup> Werner Georg Kümmel argues that Baur reached the conclusions of his article on the parties in Corinth (1831) ‘by purely exegetical means.’<sup>39</sup> Albert Schweitzer himself, who certainly found fault with Baur on several points, nevertheless believed ‘the great merit of the Tübingen critic was that he allowed the texts to speak for themselves, to mean what they said.’<sup>40</sup>

In addition, Robert Morgan believes Baur’s critics are far off-base when they cite the ‘Ohne Philosophie’ in order to claim he contaminated his history with *a priori*, skeptical philosophy. He has resolutely argued for a more sober interpretation of Baur’s intentions:

This does not imply that history should be forced into a philosophical mold, but that its meaning cannot be made plain without the help of metaphysics... It was a prior theological commitment and interest in exposing the truth of the Christian tradition which drove Baur to modern philosophy and to critical history.<sup>41</sup>

But Baur’s infamy here has not been limited to the apologists of orthodoxy. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) represents the secular equivalent of the rebuke, and again demonstrates how far and wide—and

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<sup>36</sup> This is also observed by Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 2. For examples of this sort of power-play, see some of those sources cited in my notes 31 and 33 above.

<sup>37</sup> *Paul: Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1990), 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, Society for the Study of the New Testament Monograph Series 56 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; reprint, 1988), 2.

<sup>39</sup> *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972): 1:130.

<sup>40</sup> *Paul and His Interpreters* (*supra* note 31), 13. In addition, Kaye (‘Lightfoot and Baur,’ 217) refers to the comments of C.K. Barrett, to the effect that Baur’s ‘fundamental analysis of earliest Christianity is based...upon his detailed study of the text of the New Testament, particularly the Pauline epistles.’ (Kaye provides no reference.) Riches (*Century of New Testament Study* [*supra* note 31], 7-8) speaks for Baur’s student, Otto Pfleiderer, when he claims that ‘Baur’s picture of the development of Christianity...remains, because it was based not on speculation but on careful investigation of the texts.’

<sup>41</sup> ‘Ferdinand Christian Baur,’ in Ninian Smart, *et al* (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 262.

even how early—Baur and the ‘Tübingen School’ associated with him became an object of scorn for their interdisciplinary efforts. In his classic polemic *Der Antichrist: Fluch auf das Christentum* (1888), he scolds the German philosophical tradition for allowing itself to be hijacked and corrupted by Tübingen theologians with ill motives:

Among Germans I am immediately understood when I say that philosophy has been corrupted by theologians’ blood. The Protestant parson is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself, its *peccatum originale*. Definition of Protestantism: the partial paralysis of Christianity—and of reason. One need merely say “Tübingen Seminary” to understand what German philosophy is at bottom: an *insidious* theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany: they lie innocently.<sup>42</sup>

Actually, Baur’s blending of theology with philosophy and history only point up his respect for speculative historiography, which is a holistic approach to the interpretation of history not at all subject to ridicule, but which is quite common even to this day, not merely within the guild of critical history. It also bespeaks his conviction that Christian theology is not exempt from the scrutiny of reason and history, which a skeptic like Nietzsche ought to have appreciated (based upon his own *Der Antichrist*) and which is another value that Baur shares with a great many Christian theologians today, not least some of those who find nothing of positive value in his work.

The internal relation of Baur’s historical method and Hegel’s philosophy of speculative historiography (Are they fundamentally the same? How do they differ?), since it is the real underlying issue in much of the insult Baur has suffered, demands careful consideration and will be the focus of the next Chapter. As to the external issue of the timing of Baur’s immersion in Hegelianism, this has been the most prominent point of discussion in all the secondary literature, whether positive or negative. And those

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<sup>42</sup> Translation by Walter Kaufmann in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, The Viking Portable Library, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976), 576. AD (*Der Antichrist: Fluch auf das Christentum*, Gesamte Ausgabe in Grossoktav, Vol. VIII [Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1895]; republished in *Gesammelte Werke, Musarionausgabe*, Vol. 17 [München: Musarion Verlag, 1926], 178): ‘Unter Deutschen versteht man sofort, wenn ich sage, dass die Philosophie durch Theologen-Blut verderbt ist. Der protestantische Pfarrer ist Grossvater der deutschen Philosophie, der Protestantismus selbst ihr peccatum originale. Definition des Protestantismus: die halbseitige Lähmung des Christenthums – und der Vernunft... Man hat nur das Wort „Tübinger Stift“ auszusprechen, um zu begreifen, was die deutsche Philosophie im Grunde ist, – eine *hinterlistige* Theologie... Die Schwaben sind die besten Lügner in Deutschland, sie lügen unschuldig...’

who start with the assumption that Baur dove headlong into Hegelianism, as I mentioned above, deduce from this that all his views on early church history were derived from his Hegelian agenda: ‘Baur’s industry and erudition, and the brilliance of his critical insight at certain points, cannot compensate for the fatal weakness of the foundation on which the whole structure has been erected.’<sup>43</sup>

But as I have explained in Chapter 2,<sup>44</sup> serious studies of Baur have labored to show that the core of his entire church history, guided as it was by apostolic conflict and party-lines in the early church and the path to eventual reconciliation, was laid out in his 1831 article, ‘Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde,’ which was only supplemented by the later monographs on Paul and then Christianity in the second and third centuries, and that it was not until 1833 at least that Baur expressed any acquaintance with Hegel’s ‘Religionsphilosophy,’ almost certainly a reference to the publication of Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* in 1832. (The *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* was not published until 1837.) This has been acknowledged even by some of Baur’s harshest critics<sup>45</sup> (although it has also been denied by some others).<sup>46</sup> Strangely, it has not stopped some of these very same critics from claiming that his entire theory of opposing parties in the early church was the result of his *a priori* Hegelianism.<sup>47</sup> What is needed is a more direct study of the nuances of Hegel’s historical project as well as Baur’s historical theology and a careful analysis of their relation (see Chapter 4).

That Baur only maintained his Hegelian scheme of church history by gross oversimplifications is likewise a very common criticism. David G. Horrell provides a very helpful summary of what is probably

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<sup>43</sup> Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> See especially my p. 25, note 86, pp. 33-34, notes 119 and 123, and pp. 37-38.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Geiger, *Spekulation und Kritik*, 42-43; Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 21; Harris, *Tübingen School*, 25-27, 156; *et al.*

<sup>46</sup> E.g. Ellis, ‘Foreword,’ xii-xiii. Haussleiter (‘Baur’ [*supra* note 31], 8) is ambiguous on this. He says Baur’s ‘transition from Schleiermacher to Hegel was a gradual process which took place between 1826 and 1835,’ and that it was ‘in his tractate on the opposition between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, in answer to Möhler (Tübingen, 1834)’ that ‘Hegelian terminology begins to appear distinctly.’

<sup>47</sup> E.g. Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 23-27.

the most important monograph to challenge Baur's traditional antithesis of 'Hebrew Christianity' versus 'Hellenistic Christianity' in the early church, namely Craig C. Hill's *Hellenists and Hebrews* (1992).<sup>48</sup> As Horrell explains, Hill takes direct aim at Baur and says, in a nutshell, that early Christianity was simply far more diverse than such simplistic categorizations as 'Hebrew' Christianity and 'Hellenistic' Christianity:

Hill relates this view of the Hebrew and Hellenist parties in the Jerusalem churches to the influential theory of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), a German historian of early Christianity... Hill's basic objection is that the evidence is too slender to allow the reconstruction of a distinctively 'Hellenist' theology, versus that of the Hebrews; divisions and diversity there certainly were, but to present a picture of two distinct groups with distinctive theological positions is, according to Hill, both to go beyond and to contradict the available evidence. Can we really deduce the theology of a whole *group* from the speech of Stephen written by Luke? *And what about the diversity of positions represented in the supposedly 'conservative' Hebrew wing? Not all of these 'Hebrew' Jewish Christians took the same stance with regard to what the Gentiles should be required to do; they were prepared to welcome Gentile converts into the church (just as Jews welcomed proselytes) but disagreed as to the level of law-observance required of them. Some thought that circumcision was obligatory, others that only a minimum of law-observance, such as that encapsulated in the 'apostolic decree' (see Acts 15.20, 29), was necessary.*<sup>49</sup>

The only appropriate response to this objection is to show it is simply wrong. Baur acknowledged tremendous diversity on both sides of the conflict between the 'Hebrews' and the 'Hellenists.' In fact, in his *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, he explicitly discusses diversity within the so-called 'Hebrew' wing of Christianity on the matter of Gentile circumcision in particular, and that prior to the reconciliation:

When Paulinism and Jewish Christianity first came to stand in open opposition to each other, we find the motive power in those Judaists who met the apostle Paul with an uncompromising resistance at every point of his sphere of labor... At first the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem asserted in absolute terms the necessity of circumcision, and demanded that the Gentiles also should submit to that rite... [Then] the Jewish Christians themselves gave up the necessity of circumcision, a fact which can only be explained by supposing that, as they saw large and increasing numbers of Gentiles converted without submitting to circumcision, they came to feel it to be simply impossible to insist upon a point which the history of Gentile Christianity had practically settled... We see then that it was on the question of circumcision that the absolute

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<sup>48</sup> *Supra* note 5.

<sup>49</sup> Horrell, *Introduction to the Study of Paul* (*supra* note 31), 17-18 (italics mine).

power of Judaism first gave way. It is true that *there still continued to be Jewish Christians, who not only continued to regard the law as absolutely binding on themselves, but even declined all fellowship with Gentile Christians who did not observe the law as they did. But this was the more rigid type, and there was another class of Jewish Christians, holding less extreme opinions, who made no such demand on Gentile Christians, and who nevertheless recognized them as Christian brethren.*<sup>50</sup>

Hill's study builds upon the growing consensus among scholars today that first century Judaism was far more diverse than previously imagined,<sup>51</sup> aiming instead to prove that early, Jewish Christianity was equally more diverse than Baur in particular imagined.<sup>52</sup> 'The earliest church was untidily diverse, not neatly divided... Put simply, the situation was complicated – much more so than previous scholarly constructions would lead us to believe.'<sup>53</sup> He finds Baur's history too broad and simplistic, but fails to acknowledge that a broad, generalized outline is all Baur *intended* to offer: a relatively brief history of the church 'in the first three centuries.' Baur's chosen terminology for the earliest church in Jerusalem—'Hebrews' and 'Hellenists'—is simply the terminology of the book of Acts itself (6:1, etc.), which is also only a general portrait. Indeed, Baur's uncanny ability to identify and interpret the general tendencies of so large a collection of data as we have in the early Christian writings into a collective whole is identified by Stephen C. Neil, one of Baur's harshest critics, as his single greatest attribute:

Baur's strength was in his capacity for seeing things as wholes. There is always a tendency in theology, as elsewhere, towards specialization. We think of the New Testament as a separate world, neatly framed off by the Canon, and observing laws of its own which are not applicable to other fields. It was one great contribution of Baur that he recognized that the New Testament itself is part of church history.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, trans., Rev. Allan Menzies (London/Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1878), 1:106-108 (italics mine); AD: *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*, Geschichte der christlichen Kirche (Tubingen: L.F. Fues, 1853), 1:101-103.

<sup>51</sup> *Hellenists and Hebrews*, 1-4.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-17.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 19-20.



Horton Harris of course also disagrees with much of Baur's interpretations (see below), but likewise believes that whereas Baur was not the first to conduct historical investigations of the early church history and the New Testament, nevertheless 'he presented not just new solutions to individual questions but a new total-view, a comprehensive picture of the situation of the early Church, and a new standard by which the New Testament narratives might be appraised.'<sup>55</sup>

That Baur's 'overly simplistic' scheme can be reduced to two neat, unilateral paths in opposite directions that later merged instantaneously to form Catholicism is not only a common assumption, it often finds expression in an unabashed mocking tone:

Many hypotheses [of early church history] have been constructed whose simplicity lies in *straightforward 'movements,'* and in the *unilinear developments* of great ideas... Another example is the scheme proposed last century by F.C. Baur, which still exercises a good deal of influence in some quarters today. *How simple, how tidy, to have Jewish Christianity developing this way, Gentile Christianity developing that way, and then the two joining together to make Early Catholicism!* ... Such a scheme fails as history, because—as can be seen in the havoc it makes of the actual data—*history simply does not seem to have moved like this, in neat unilinear patterns.* We find regress as well as progress. There is downright change, not simply smooth observable development. People and societies retrace steps, try different paths. They do not always march forward in a straight line... But, as has been shown powerfully in recent years, the simplicity of Baur's idealist scheme was deceptive... *There is a tidiness proper to full human life. There is also the tidiness of the graveyard.*<sup>56</sup>

But again, the words of Baur, which deserve to be read rather than caricatured by those who have not actually read them, offer by themselves a resounding refutation:

The interval which elapsed between the death of the apostle Paul and that point [of reconciliation with Judaizing Christianity] *contains many movements in many different directions, and the development of the history will conduct us to that goal by a longer road than might have been supposed...* In the interval between these two extremes, *there must be steps of reconciliation;* and from the nature of the case nothing is more probably than that the movement towards unity proceeded, *not from one side only, but from both, of course in different ways.* We should expect to find that both parties, feeling more or less distinctly that they belonged together, act upon each other in *the living process of development,* each party modifying the other, and being modified by it in turn...<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School*, 181. See also Kaye, 'Lightfoot and Baur,' 199.

<sup>56</sup> N.T. Wright, *New Testament and the People of God* (*supra* note 31), 108-109 (italics mine).

<sup>57</sup> Baur, *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 77, 105 (italics mine); AD: *Das Christenthum*, 1:72, 100.

Even a cursory reading of Baur's *Church History of the First Three Centuries* reveals that he identifies numerous, diverse groups within both sides of the overall conflict. Within the Judaizing element alone Baur identifies as many factions as there are 'catholic' Epistles. He likewise discusses specific subgroups by name, including the Ebionites and even a Johannine community in Asia Minor. Within Paulinism he distinguishes numerous segments, including the Marcionites, the so-called Balaamites and Nicolaitans of Asia Minor (so named in the book of Revelation), those conciliatory Paulinists responsible for the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, those Paulinists responsible for the pastoral Epistles, certain Paulinists among the Apostolic Fathers, the Montanists, and then the Gnostics, which include numerous subgroups and personages within themselves: Cerinthus, Simon Magus, Ophites, Perates, Valentinus, Basilides, and the docetists. Throughout the discussion Baur locates each of these groups to their respective places along a grand paradigm that stretches from the extreme of Paulinism to the extreme of the Judaizers and everything between.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, this line of criticism against Baur often says that his gross oversimplification is made clear by comparison to the insurmountable evidence to the contrary of his history, evidence which was strong enough for everyone else that it achieved a 'consensus' in its demolition of the Tübingen School. As I said above, this package of evidence is accredited to the definitive work of Lightfoot.<sup>59</sup> 'It is sometimes suggested that Lightfoot's labors on the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers were directed towards the rebuttal of the Tübingen School, and in particular, to the views of F.C. Baur,'<sup>60</sup> with the result that 'he effectively destroyed Baur's chronology of the New Testament writings'<sup>61</sup> and 'the [Tübingen] theories had been killed stone dead.'<sup>62</sup> In retrospect it appears that 'once Baur had formulated

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<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, Second Part and Third Part, pp. 44-256; AD: *Das Christenthum*, 1:42-304.

<sup>59</sup> For the references to Lightfoot and Theodor Zahn, see my note 20 above.

<sup>60</sup> Kaye, 'Lightfoot and Baur,' 214.

<sup>61</sup> John K. Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 53.

<sup>62</sup> Neill; see my note 22.

his essential conception of Christian origins, no amount of evidence could shake him from his conclusions.’<sup>63</sup>

But Kaye clarifies that Lightfoot only disproved Baur’s dating of the writings of Clement and Ignatius.<sup>64</sup> This fact is not nearly enough recognized among Baur’s opponents. Neill epitomizes the *non sequitur* step taken so often against Baur, which throws the baby out with the bathwater when it concludes from Lightfoot’s work on the Epistles of Ignatius that Baur’s entire life-work is in fact nullified (‘killed stone dead’). The above quote by Neil comes at the end of a very brief discussion only concerned with Lightfoot and Theodore Zahn’s studies on these limited texts, not the New Testament, which was the basis upon which Baur constructed almost the entirety of his early church history. In addition it is in fact an oversimplification to attribute to Lightfoot so great a consensus on the matter of the Ignatian Epistles anyway.<sup>65</sup> Bart D. Ehrman states that

there were several challenges to the consensus during the second half of the twentieth century—some scholars maintaining that the entire corpus was forged (Weijenborg, Joly), others that some of the seven letters were altered and others fabricated (Rius-Camps), and others arguing that the letters must date not from the early second century but from a later period, when full-blown Gnosticism was threatening the proto-orthodox church (Lechner; cf. Hübner).<sup>66</sup>

Ehrman likewise confirms indirectly that Baur’s interpretation of the *Homilies of Clement* have indeed stood the test of time when he introduces the text thusly:

The ‘Homilies of Clement’ is an example of a pseudonymous Christian writing... The Homilies embrace a Jewish-Christian perspective. Peter is shown to be the chief apostle, bearer of Christ’s

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<sup>63</sup> Gasque; see my note 32.

<sup>64</sup> Kaye, ‘Lightfoot and Baur,’ 193. Cf. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (eds., *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004], 16), who, in their brief treatment of Baur’s article on the parties of Corinth (1831)—i.e. not his work on the Ignatian Epistles—cannot but make a point to say that ‘J.B. Lightfoot blew a significant hole in Baur’s reconstruction by demonstrating the authenticity of the letters of Ignatius,’ even though Baur called 1 Corinthians authentically Pauline and gave it an early date (50’s CE).

<sup>65</sup> Not only Neill, but see also Harris, *Tübingen School*, 216: ‘Baur’s arguments [were] decisively answered by Theodore Zahn and J.B. Lightfoot,’ ‘who established conclusively the authenticity of all seven letters.’

<sup>66</sup> Ehrman (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I: *I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache*, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. 24, trans. Bart D. Ehrman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003; reprint, 2005), 212.

power and leader of Christ's church; he claims ascendancy over his arch-rival, the magician Simon Magus, whom scholars often understand to be a thinly veiled cipher for the apostle Paul in this text, who is attacked for his view that salvation can come apart from the Jewish Law. Not so for this author, who stands within the Jewish-Christian tradition that saw the ongoing importance of the Law of Moses for salvation. The author tries to show Peter's (Jewish-Christian) understanding of the Gospel to be superior to Paul's in a number of ways... The Homilies are closely related to another surviving work of the third century attributed to Clement, the *Recognitions*...<sup>67</sup>

And the byproduct of Lightfoot's work on the Apostolic Fathers—the dating of the New Testament texts within the first century—is not a settled issue either. A very powerful stream of contemporary New Testament interpretation holds a second century date for 2 Peter and Revelation and a borderline date for the Gospel of John and the pastoral Epistles. Kaye also proves it is furthermore overly simplistic to suggest in the first place that Lightfoot set out to eliminate once and for all the predominant views of the Tübingen School or F.C. Baur. He insists 'the matter is much less simple than this and Baur and Lightfoot share a great deal more in their approach than some are willing to credit.'<sup>68</sup>

But more important for my purposes (and since I happen to believe Lightfoot's insights are among the single most important exegetical insights in the history of New Testament and Christian-origins studies), to the degree Lightfoot can be called the 'last word' on the dating and authenticity of the seven Epistles of Ignatius, it is surprisingly ignored by Baur's adversaries that the work of Theodor Zahn and Lightfoot (1873 and 1885) was some four decades *after* Baur was supposedly using his Procrustean bed to ignore the unassailable evidence which won for them a 'consensus.' Baur's *Die ignatianischen Briefe und ihr neuester Kritiker* was published in 1848,<sup>69</sup> only three years after the publication of the complete set of the (late) Coptic manuscripts recovered from the Nitrian monastery, at which time the only publication to the effect that four of the Ignatian Epistles were authentic (no one was arguing for the authenticity of seven) was that by C.C.J. Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador to Britain. Indeed, when Baur

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<sup>67</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 195-196.

<sup>68</sup> Kaye, 'Lightfoot and Baur,' 214.

<sup>69</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die ignatianischen Briefe und ihr neuester Kritiker: Eine Streitschrift gegen Herrn Bunsen* (Tübingen: Verlag und Druck von Ludwig Friedrich Fues), 1848.

published his response, arguing for the inauthenticity of all the Ignatian Epistles (which he had argued long before the renewed interest was born thanks to the discovery of the manuscripts), his work was well received and *it* was the powerhouse that would only later be replaced by Lightfoot.<sup>70</sup>

### Hodgson, Harris, and the Problem of Two Baur's

As to the final matter of whether or not Baur can in any way be thought a Christian, the relatively recent work of two scholars in particular provides us with arguments for both possibilities. Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to recast (and maybe redeem) the image of Baur is the aforementioned monograph by Peter C. Hodgson from 1966.<sup>71</sup> He is at pains to demonstrate that ‘Baur did not remain an uncritical or slavish adherent to Hegel’s panentheism,’ that ‘his critical procedure was in no way a priori,’ and that he ‘did not believe that historical theology had emasculated the absoluteness or universality or divinity of Christianity, but rather had rendered its absolute truth intelligible in a new way.’<sup>72</sup> In addition, Hodgson claims that Baur in fact parts ways with Hegel on the matter of Christology in particular,<sup>73</sup> and he uses the sermon material of Baur (as well as other published works) to see and evaluate the conclusions that he himself drew from his otherwise non-traditional theological positions and assumptions,<sup>74</sup> since it is his goal throughout to ascertain ‘the place historical study should occupy in Christian theology, or the relation between *historical knowledge* and *faith*.’<sup>75</sup> Ultimately, he believes: Baur’s historical theology is proven ‘intrinsically proper and necessary to the task of Christian dogmatics as a whole,’ and that it ‘is the “relevant counterpart” to revelation, the proper response of faith in the

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<sup>70</sup> It may also be important to keep in mind here that while Baur’s critics point to his poor judgment with regard to the dating of the Ignatian Epistles as the result of his prior agenda—i.e. to preserve intact his own construction of the New Testament history—Lightfoot himself approached them with equal agenda: to set the *episcopacy* in as close a relation as possible to the Apostles so as to defend the Anglican Church that he served as *bishop*.

<sup>71</sup> *The Formation of Historical Theology* (*supra* note 1).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 54-66.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20, 110-118.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, xi (*italics mine*).

presence of historical revelation.' 'It embraces...an internal mediation of faith and historical knowledge.'<sup>76</sup>

For the most part, Hodgson's work was embraced by critics. In 1967 Avery Robert Dulles said Hodgson 'presented Baur clearly and succinctly,' and that he 'evaluated him judiciously from a basically conservative, moderately Barthian standpoint.'<sup>77</sup> In the same year, Rolf Schäfer called Hodgson's work 'an excellent, carefully written presentation of the lifework of Baur.'<sup>78</sup> In 1968 and 1969, H.T. Mayer and Brian A. Gerrish both wrote highly positive reviews of the book.<sup>79</sup> Gerrish's review may be especially important here, as at the time he was overseeing the aforementioned doctoral dissertation of Joseph Fitzer at the University of Chicago Divinity School, finished in 1970 and published in 1974 as the seventh volume in the AAR Studies in Religion series, on the subject of Baur's conflict with Dr. Möhler of the Tübingen Catholic faculty in the years 1832-38.<sup>80</sup> Gerrish calls Hodgson's study a 'first-rate piece of work' and 'an excellent presentation of a complex assortment of materials.'<sup>81</sup>

But in the aforementioned review by Penzel in the *Journal of Religion* (1968), arguably Hodgson's most important review, Penzel raised an important point. While he judged that Hodgson's work in comparison with Geiger's (1964)<sup>82</sup> was 'the more impressive,' 'as he succeeded in bringing Baur to life,' he nevertheless viewed both treatments, different as they were in their overall judgments of Baur,

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 280-281.

<sup>77</sup> Dulles, Review (*supra* note 4), 144.

<sup>78</sup> Review of Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, in *Religion in Life* 36 no 4, 621.

<sup>79</sup> See Mayer's Review of Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39 no 7 JI-Ag (1968): 511-512, and Gerrish's Review of Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, in *Church History* 38 no 2 Je (1969): 273-274.

<sup>80</sup> See Joseph Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy, 1832-38: Romantic-Idealist Assessment of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation*, AAR Studies in Religion, No. 7 (Tallahassee, FL: American Academy of Religion, 1974).

<sup>81</sup> Review, 273, 274.

<sup>82</sup> *Spekulation und Kritik* (*supra* note 1).

as ‘outstanding scholarly achievements.’<sup>83</sup> Moreover, he concluded that Geiger’s work was to serve as an important counter-balance to the perceived apologetic tendencies of Hodgson.<sup>84</sup> He compares the two like this:

Geiger is basically critical of Baur, while Hodgson, though critical in places, is primarily apologetic of him. Geiger represents, so to say, the prosecutor, calling relentlessly upon one witness after the other to put his probing questions to Baur; Hodgson is the lawyer for the defense, who believes that his client’s case—the case of the founder of a historical theology—is so sound that he should be allowed, at least most of the time, to speak for himself.<sup>85</sup>

In the end, Penzel suggests that neither Geiger’s nor Hodgson’s work can be called the last word on Baur, but that ‘they are, perhaps, but the first two stages in the triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis,’ leaving scholars in general waiting for the real Ferdinand Christian Baur to stand up.<sup>86</sup>

This challenge was answered by Horton Harris in 1975.<sup>87</sup> But rather than a synthesis of the two previous works, Harris explicitly identifies himself with the outlook of Geiger before and takes issue at numerous points with Hodgson.<sup>88</sup> In addition to criticisms leveled against Hodgson’s translations,<sup>89</sup> as well as the meaning he attributes to some words and ideas,<sup>90</sup> Harris finds him at various points ‘quite inaccurate,’ ‘ambiguous and misleading’ (twice), and ‘inconsistent.’<sup>91</sup> Most important, and like Penzel before but much more so, Harris is offended by Hodgson’s apparent apologetic aim. He offers this scathing rebuke, which also manages to lay waste any notion that Baur can be called a Christian:

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<sup>83</sup> Penzel, ‘Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur,’ 314, 321.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 320: ‘Geiger is basically critical of Baur, while Hodgson, though critical in places, is primarily apologetic of him.’

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>87</sup> *The Tübingen School* (*supra* note 6).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, and see note 9.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 (note 21), 171 (note 23),

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 160 (note 2), 172 (note 24),

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 41 (note 45), 159 (note 2) and 179 (note 36), and 179 (note 37).

Hodgson's evaluation of Baur's theological viewpoint is often ambiguous and misleading, mainly because he strives to present Baur as a pious Christian believer who nevertheless rejected the supernatural element in Christianity, the concept of a personal God, and the divinity of Christ. This dichotomy runs through Hodgson's entire presentation... Hodgson...knows full well that Baur abandoned all the traditional Christian doctrines concerning the existence of a personal God and the divinity of Christ, nevertheless wants to play down this fact and present Baur in as orthodox a guise as possible... Hodgson desperately strives to portray Baur as more orthodox than he really was.<sup>92</sup>

Whereas Hodgson relies heavily upon Baur's sermons and other unpublished materials, explicitly appealing to their great value in an earnest study of Baur and his personal theology, maintaining that Baur was and intended to remain a Christian,<sup>93</sup> it is precisely here that Harris believes Hodgson 'is especially to be criticized' for his failure to consider that 'Baur could not state his beliefs openly in books, let alone before the pietists in the Tübingen *Stiftskirche*.' The sermons 'cannot be taken at face value.'<sup>94</sup> Even though Hodgson provides a host of sermon excerpts that 'sound extremely orthodox,' Harris resolutely believes 'by no honest stretch of the imagination could it be said that Baur believed these words.'<sup>95</sup> Ellis's 'Foreword' to Harris likewise says Baur's 'rationalism' and his 'non-theistic view of deity' (whatever that means) 'identifies his theology...as an essentially pagan manifestation of another religion sitting under the umbrella of the institutional Church,' claiming that it was only 'like some Gnostic or Gnostic-influenced Christians of the late second century' that Baur 'remained active in the church until his death.' Rather than face the responsibility of explaining why Baur should have remained within the Christian religion and biblical studies for his entire life despite his alleged, obvious paganism, Ellis merely says 'his job depended on it.'<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, Harris is also dedicated to reclaiming the traditional view of Baur's Hegelianism. Again in explicit disagreement with Hodgson, he staunchly believes 'that during the years 1833-47 Baur

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160 note 2. In the updated edition of 1990, Ellis ('Foreward,' xiii and note 42) underscores this complaint.

<sup>93</sup> See Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, xi, 19, 110-118.

<sup>94</sup> *Tübingen School*, 177 note 35.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.



stood unreservedly under the Hegelian flag' and that he 'defended Hegel against all attacks.'<sup>97</sup> He also goes to great lengths to reaffirm the traditional views of Baur as a disaster of would-be presuppositionless history: 'If we learn anything from the procedure of the Tübingen School it is this: that *Biblical exegesis and interpretation without conscious or unconscious dogmatic presuppositions is impossible*.'<sup>98</sup> Finally, he fervently defends the common assertion that Baur invented his ideas of early Christian conflict and then manipulated the early Christian texts to prove them, ignoring data here and projecting imaginary data there: 'Baur *forced* the books into the framework by manipulating the facts and distorting the evidence, by emphasizing the details which harmonized with his views while omitting everything which did not.'<sup>99</sup>

However, it must be noted here that Baur's alleged, incontrovertible Hegelian presuppositions do not constitute Harris's primary objection to the man's historical theology. Instead, what he is most offended by is Baur's supposedly naïve desire to conduct 'a free investigation of the New Testament,' that is, 'an investigation uninhibited by the traditional supernatural presuppositions,' 'in short, a presuppositionless investigation.'<sup>100</sup> In Harris's judgment, Baur's history fails to be objective because he began with an automatic exclusion of divine intervention or absolute miracle as a legitimate possibility in history-writing and this forced him to adopt an unorthodox theology of a non-personal god who never acts and might as well not exist (hence his claim that Baur is an atheist).<sup>101</sup> 'Not the Hegelian philosophy, but the acceptance or rejection of a transcendent personal God determined Baur's dogmatic and historical investigations.'<sup>102</sup> Especially important to Harris is his suspicion that Baur rejected the possibility of a literal, physical resurrection. I say 'suspicion' simply because he can provide no reference to any denial

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 262 (italics his).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 258 (italics his).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, 159-169.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

on Baur's part in any of his publications (and flatly rejects Hodgson's references to the Christology of Baur's sermon material) to this effect, but deduces this as the only possibility given Baur's general policy of rejecting supernatural occurrences in history.<sup>103</sup> It is a fair deduction.

I will address in greater detail the aims and assumptions of Baur's historical methodology in Chapter 4, where I will also try to explain how it was that Baur saw himself at home within Christianity despite his seemingly non-personal, perhaps pantheistic conception of ultimate reality. For now, I will limit myself to the reception of Harris's work. Frankly it was not well received, and by Harris's own admission the 'updated' edition of 1990 contains no emendation.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, since it is rightfully viewed as 'the first full-scale history of the [Tübingen School] and its influence to appear in English',<sup>105</sup> and 'the most comprehensive study of the subject for a century',<sup>106</sup> it requires some treatment in any discussion of the reception of F.C. Baur, all the more so as nothing has been written directly on the subject since it.<sup>107</sup>

To say the least, Harris's criticisms of Hodgson pale in comparison to the criticisms he suffered in turn. John Bowden in 1975 wrote that the piece was greatly disappointing and not worth the time it takes to read it.<sup>108</sup> He claimed Harris 'does not see the point of the discussion over the nature of belief in God which has been carried on for the last thirty years,' adding that 'he does not seem very familiar with the equally extensive discussion of the nature of history and historical enquiry which has continued over the same period.'<sup>109</sup> He questions whether Harris was the right person to have authored such a book, and

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-180.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.

<sup>105</sup> Gasque, Review, 33 [1041].

<sup>106</sup> J. Atkinson, Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30 no 2 (1977), 187.

<sup>107</sup> By 'since it,' I mean the 1975 version. It was republished in 1990 by Baker Book House. One example of an important work that interacts with Baur in many places, but which appears to depend heavily upon Harris (and Ellis), with no apparent familiarity with Hodgson, would be Peter Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology* (*supra* note 31): 152-154, etc.

<sup>108</sup> Review (*supra* note 17), 654, 655.

speaks in defense of Baur.<sup>110</sup> The next year, Owen Chadwick likewise found the work unconvincing and spoke in defense of the Tübingen master: 'This reviewer is not quite persuaded to dethrone Baur.'<sup>111</sup> On the other hand Manfred Kwiran, writing for the *Theologische Zeitschrift*, considered himself and everyone else in Harris's debt for such a good book.<sup>112</sup>

In 1977 Joseph Fitzer wrote what was probably Harris's most important review. It was published in the *Journal of Religion* and more importantly, Fitzer was an established scholar of Baur. As noted above, he had published a monograph on Baur for the American Academy of Religion the year prior to Harris's work.<sup>113</sup> Fitzer began his response by calling Harris's work 'perplexing,' alleging that in it 'absurdities abound.'<sup>114</sup> The following year, Pervo called it 'disappointing,' 'inadequate,' 'banal,' 'otiose,' and 'quite misleading.'<sup>115</sup> By far, the most devastating objections made to Harris, which are repeated among the numerous reviewers, were that he was wrong on the question of Baur's Hegelianism, wrong on Baur's historical method and the question of presuppositions, and that he had essentially written a 'hatchet job.'

As to the first, Fitzer said 'Harris's treatment of the Hegel-Baur relationship is seriously flawed,' and confessed: 'One wonders whether Harris has not misinterpreted the nature of Baur's and, for that matter, Hegel's Hegelianism.'<sup>116</sup> Robert Grady North also wrote that Harris's treatment of the

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 655.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 27 no 2 O (1976), 510.

<sup>112</sup> Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Theologische Zeitschrift* 32 no 4 JI-Ag (1976), 240: 'Nicht nur die Studenten der Theologiegeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, sondern auch alle, die unsere heutigen Diskussionen verfolgen möchten, werden Harris für dieses Werk zu danken wissen.'

<sup>113</sup> See Joseph Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy* (*supra* note 80).

<sup>114</sup> Review, 94.

<sup>115</sup> Review, 222-223.

<sup>116</sup> Review, 95, 96.

Hegelianism question was oversimplified and faults Harris for not considering the implications of his judgment upon Baur for what he calls ‘the immense Hegel renaissance in theological circles.’<sup>117</sup>

But Fitzer also found problems, secondly, in the handling of the historiography questions: ‘Want of care in rhetoric, in translation, and in historiographical selection casts a shadow on the whole enterprise.’<sup>118</sup> This was the chief complaint made by Pervo. Harris had chosen the question of Jesus’ resurrection as the point from which to launch his barrage against Baur for his predisposed rejection of supernatural miracles as a legitimate scenario in historical investigation, arguing instead that ‘the body of Jesus was never found,’ which he calls ‘a historical fact which has never been disproved.’<sup>119</sup> But Pervo claims this misses the point and that it is fundamentally flawed:

Whatever one may think about such argumentation, it is clear that Harris tries to insist upon a *metaphysical* basis for the *empirical* method to which historians subscribe. Simply stated, that method recognizes that, while almost anything is *possible*, historians must elect from the various options available the explanations with the greatest *probability*. That people, including Christians, believe in miracles is an historical fact, but the nature of particular miracles belongs to the improbable and is, therefore, beyond the limits of what is historically ascertainable.<sup>120</sup>

Again, this same point was made by North. He also points to Harris’s use of the Resurrection as the test-case in his discussion of anti-supernatural history writing and indicts Harris for misrepresenting Baur as standing outside the mainstream of quality, modern historiography, when in fact, in North’s opinion, this place is occupied by Harris himself:

Something is said of Baur on p. 159 as a simple fact and not as a condemnation: one’s own theological views necessarily determine in advance the direction one’s critical studies will take. This observation is eminently true of Harris himself... No concern is shown on p. 176 for what

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<sup>117</sup> Review of Harris, *Tübingen School*, in *Biblica* 57 no 2 (1976), 294.

<sup>118</sup> Review, 94.

<sup>119</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School*, 180.

<sup>120</sup> Review, 222-223 (italics his). It might also be worth mentioning that Harris is simply making too much of the fact that ‘the body of Jesus was never found,’ even if ‘that is a historical fact which has never been disproved’ (Harris, *Tübingen School*, 180). Neither is there any reason to believe an *unsuccessful* search was ever conducted, nor any apparent reason why one *should* have been conducted since the ludicrous claim of the fledgling minority that was the Jesus-movement was self-evidently false as far as those who were not already a part of that movement were concerned.

the Resurrection, whether rightly or wrongly, is currently held to be in Protestant and Catholic scholarship, which would hardly be unanimous in declaring (as p. 179) apodictically false Baur's claim that it lies outside the sphere of historical investigation...<sup>121</sup>

But North's argument here points up an additional matter. Ironically, while Harris's chief complaint about Baur was that he did his work with an undeniably slanted predisposition, this is precisely what Harris's critics find most objectionable in his own study. Perhaps indicative of the success of Hodgson's earlier work and perhaps indicative of a changing general opinion in scholarship concerning Baur, they came to Baur's defense in force, yet without denying that Harris and any other observer might easily find numerous points at which to fault the entire Tübingen School. I have noted Chadwick's overall impression, that Harris's work was intended simply to 'dethrone Baur.'<sup>122</sup> Bowden admits: 'Their results and the dates they assigned to New Testament books now seem ridiculous,' but adds that 'a more sympathetic assessor might point out that, after all, Baur and his colleagues were pioneers in a hostile environment and that while they got their dates wrong they nevertheless contributed a great many insights of lasting value and had a concern which is of supreme importance even today.'<sup>123</sup> His own analysis of Harris's work is that it was conducted with an undeniably slanted predisposition opposite that which he attributed to Baur: 'Dr Harris, however, has scarcely a good word to say for them; because, as it proves, he has a rigid and all too simplistic view of God and his action in history which suggests that in biblical study a fairly rigid fundamentalism would be more congenial to him than anything else.' 'At least it would have helped if he put his own theological cards on the table so that we knew his position other than by inference.'<sup>124</sup> One year later North agreed. He said that 'without waiting for [the second] half' of the book, 'the reader must have become aware that the titillating passages plucked from the correspondence

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<sup>121</sup> Review, 294.

<sup>122</sup> Review, 510.

<sup>123</sup> Review, 655.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

are rather one-sided.’<sup>125</sup> Fitzer refers to Harris’s rebuke of Hodgson, to the effect that Baur’s ‘sermons are in the orthodox language of the time and cannot be taken at face value,’ and that ‘by no honest stretch of the imagination could it be said that Baur believed these words,’<sup>126</sup> and in turn rebukes Harris: ‘To sum up, Baur the scourge of the orthodox, Baur the theologian was an atheist and a deceiver. It is much more likely, to this reviewer, that the author Harris is kept by neoorthodox feelings from *even provisionally* allowing the possibility of “natural” theism.’<sup>127</sup> This was also the main protest of Pervo:

His major thesis, that Baur was an ‘atheist’ and therefore not capable of, or qualified for, historical-critical study, is muddled. The content of this book focuses upon peripheral issues and somehow manages to overlook the important contributions of the Tübingen theologians to the study of Early Christianity... Rarely does this author seem to engage in sympathetic dialogue with his characters and material. He elicits almost no excitement in depicting one of the most exciting periods in the history of scholarship... Harris allows no suggestion that Baur was tinged at all with orthodoxy. Here he takes issue with Peter Hodgson, whose studies of Baur reflect a more positive assessment. The implication of Harris’ view is that Baur was not sincere. Since he could not write openly of his true beliefs, let alone insert them into sermons, one must take subtle hints and read between the lines in order to discover his true views. This could be correct, of course, but Harris does not prove why the public and pious evidence should be ruled out... *The Tübingen School* seeks mainly to discredit Baur and so misses the point, as well as the fun.<sup>128</sup>

The point these reviewers are trying to make is that made by Francis Watson not long after: ‘While no-one doubts that [Baur] was wrong on a large number of historical points, his historical and critical approach to the study of Paul has been of incalculable significance to the study of the New Testament.’<sup>129</sup> Certainly, Harris believes Baur and the contributions of the Tübingen School are of great importance; that is the premise of his work: ‘The Tübingen School was not of merely minor importance for theology. It was *the most important theological event in the whole history of theology from the Reformation to the*

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<sup>125</sup> Review, 294.

<sup>126</sup> Harris, *Tübingen School*, 177 note 35.

<sup>127</sup> Review, 96.

<sup>128</sup> Review, 222-223.

<sup>129</sup> *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 183 note 16.

*present day.*<sup>130</sup> The difference between Harris and his critics is that in his estimation, Baur's importance lies only in what he can teach scholars today what *not* to do, what mistakes to avoid. For Harris this is all the more true with respect to Christian faith. As far as he is concerned, Baur and the Tübingen School made no substantial *positive* contribution to Christian thought and ultimately betrayed their Christian commitments. Hence, Bowden: 'Dr Harris, however, has scarcely a good word to say for them.'<sup>131</sup> Likewise Pervo: 'On the really significant contributions of the School, however, Harris is strangely reticent. The most important of these contributions neglected by our writer is the historical method.'<sup>132</sup>

I should like to point out one more example of Harris's determination to see Baur's importance only in the lessons to be gleaned from his mistakes, to the neglect of its positive worth. Between Harris himself and Ellis, who provides the 'Foreword' to the updated edition of 1990, this line by Ernst Käsemann from 1963 is quoted twice in support of the book's main thesis:<sup>133</sup>

If there is anyone who demonstrates that there is no such thing as presuppositionless theology, then it is Baur. In every detail of methodology we are chained to our dogmatic premises. Not the presuppositionless theology is possible, but the theology which radically questions and is continually ready to correct itself. That means, however, that we must give an account of the dogmatic tradition from which we come and in which we find ourselves in the present time.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *Tübingen School*, xvii. See also p. 1: 'No single event ever changed the course of Biblical scholarship as much as the appearance of the Tübingen School. All New Testament criticism and, derivatively, much Old Testament criticism from the mid-nineteenth century onwards finds its origin, consciously or unconsciously, in this School. For almost twenty years the Tübingen School dominated the whole *avant-garde* investigation of the New Testament, and the reverberations in this field set up a corresponding reaction in the realm of Old Testament study. It is no exaggeration when we say that the Tübingen School constituted the central point of nineteenth-century Biblical research.'

<sup>131</sup> Review, 655.

<sup>132</sup> Review, 223.

<sup>133</sup> See Ellis's 'Foreword,' xiii (note 42) and Harris, *Tübingen School*, 250-251.

<sup>134</sup> 'Einführung,' in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Ausgewählte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, Vol. 1, ed. Klaus Scholder (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzbog], 1963), xxiv (translation by Horton Harris). AD: 'Wenn irgendeiner beweist gerade Baur, dass es voraussetzungslose Wissenschaft nicht gibt. Bis in die Methodik hinein sind wir unsern dogmatischen Prämissen verhaftet. Nicht die voraussetzungslose, sondern die radikal fragende und zur dauernden Selbstkorrektur bereit Wissenschaft ist möglich. Das besagt jedoch, dass wir uns Rechenschaft über die dogmatische Tradition geben, aus der wir herkommen und in der wir uns jeweils befinden.'

It is not hard to see why Ellis and Harris would want to have a scholar of Käsemann's stature bolstering their main point. But it is equally clear why the glowing praise Käsemann elsewhere showered upon Baur, despite his faults, was *not* included in the study. In his *Einführung* to the writings collected by Klaus Scholder in 1963 (well before the first edition of Harris), he could say 'it is with the writings presented here that the first truly historical investigation of early Christianity and the New Testament is founded,' even though he nevertheless felt that 'Baur's individual results remain yet only to a very limited extent valid.'<sup>135</sup> He goes on: 'Even beginners can benefit from reading [him] again and again. We learn here to ask precise questions, to ask them consistently, unflinchingly, and to the point. That is an art which is only acquired by looking at a great model and by constant practice.'<sup>136</sup> Robert Morgan furthermore points out Käsemann's public endorsement of Baur in his 1974 presidential address to the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, where he praised the Tübingen master for making a New Testament theology 'the goal of all his efforts in the study of the New Testament.'<sup>137</sup>

To conclude this section, I feel compelled to say a word in Harris's defense, although I believe Hodgson's treatment is preferable. To ask whether or not Baur should be called Christian or whether he truly has anything positive to offer Christian faith is a very complex discussion that depends heavily on what it means to a person on a personal level to be Christian. Various councils have met and creeds have been written which aim to settle this matter of what is required in terms of faith in order to be authentically 'Christian.' But the *failure* of the councils and confessions to provide the world with anything like a consensus is proof enough that our discussions of Baur's faith—Was he Christian or not?—must be framed in terms of his own intentions and what he said for himself, and where these are

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv. AD: 'Ziehen wir aus dem recht andeutungsweise Gesagten das Ergebnis: Obgleich erst mit den hier vorgelegten Schriften die wirklich geschichtliche Erforschung der Urchristenheit und des Neuen Testamentes begründet wird, sind Baur's Einzelergebnisse doch nur in sehr begrenztem Umfang gültig geblieben.'

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, viii. This loose ET is by Robert Morgan in his 'Biblical Classics II. F.C. Baur: Paul,' in *The Expository Times* 90 (1978), 4. AD: 'Baur mahnt uns weiterhin an eine nicht erfüllte und unaufgebbare Aufgabe. Doch lohnt es sich schon für den Anfänger, ihn wieder und wieder zu lesen. Man lernt bei ihm, präzise, konsequent, ganz auf die Sache gerichtet und unentwegt zu fragen, und das ist eine Kunst, die man nur im Blick auf ein großes Vorbild und bei dauernder Übung erwirbt.'

<sup>137</sup> See Morgan's 'F.C. Baur's Lectures on New Testament Theology,' in *The Expository Times* 88 (1977), 202. His quote is taken from *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* 19 (1974), 235.



not clear, we should not speculate. More important is the burden that now falls upon those who would give Baur the benefit of the doubt and call him ‘Christian,’ to explain how exactly it may be that his academic labors were in fact an expression of Christian devotion, despite his rejection of many traditional doctrines, perhaps even the personhood of God and the resurrection of Jesus. That will be my objective in Chapter 4. But before that, I want to raise a very important point about Baur’s place in the history of New Testament studies that I believe has gone overly neglected in the secondary literature.

#### Baur and the Not-So-New Perspective on Paul

In any discussion of the reception of F.C. Baur in New Testament studies, arguably the most important point of interest and relevancy for today, despite its curious absence from many of the most important discussions, would be his possible association with the so-called New Perspective on Paul, a movement in Christian studies that postdates Baur by more than a century, and which has perhaps been the single most important discussion within New Testament and Christian origins studies in the last four decades. In a nutshell, it has to do with a reorientation of the perspective from which one interprets Paul’s discussion of justification in the Pauline epistles. The traditional Protestant interpretation, descended from Martin Luther, is that Paul’s message of justification by faith apart from works (Rom. 3:28, *δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου*) is the Apostle’s battle against a legalistic soteriology on the part of a group called the ‘Judaizers.’ Most advocates of the New Perspective view the conflict as primarily about nationalism and church boundaries: Who is in the new covenant? Only circumcised Jews or everyone who aligns himself/herself with Jesus Christ, irrespective of the old covenant?

I have so far in this Chapter addressed the overall impression made by Baur upon his interpreters. While Baur’s faults in some ways have been misconstrued and exaggerated by some, he nevertheless has been shown highly mistaken in other ways, not least the astounding (and now absurd) late dates he assigned to the texts of the New Testament.<sup>138</sup> But in the New Perspective on Paul I have an angle by

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<sup>138</sup> See the very helpful chart in Harris, *Tübingen School*, 237.

which I can offer definitive redemption for some of the most important details of Baur's research that have unfortunately become somewhat forgotten amidst the many mistakes he did make.

As noted above, many have identified Baur as the father of modern Pauline studies.<sup>139</sup> Certainly, his *Paulus* is his most famous work and no one would dispute Hodgson when he says:

Paul was Baur's first love, and he managed to think and write from within the Pauline theological framework brilliantly at the same time that he sought to elucidate its central meaning through categories of interpretation borrowed from Schleiermacher and Hegel.<sup>140</sup>

But the possible connections between Baur and the New Perspective are almost never noticed by those who oppose it,<sup>141</sup> and that may be owing to the fact that little direct attention has been given to them even by those who favor the New Perspective. But Francis Watson cites Baur as something like its figurehead.<sup>142</sup> In his own disputation with the Old Perspective, he boldly states that Baur was 'the first to claim that Paul's polemic against Judaism was motivated by a rather different concern' than that of the traditional Lutheran interpretation.<sup>143</sup> In fact, 'Baur and his critics believed that there was a conflict

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<sup>139</sup> See my p. 62. See also my p. 42 and note 154.

<sup>140</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology*, 27.

<sup>141</sup> The following works never mention the name of Baur: Thomas Schreiner, *The Law & Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993); Frank Thielman, *Paul & the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994); Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), and most recently, John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N.T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007). Although Piper is explicitly concerned with N.T. Wright, his overall aim is to undermine the New Perspective and reinforce the traditional Lutheran view of justification.

<sup>142</sup> At least this is noticed by Stephen Westerholm in his 'The "New Perspective" at Twenty-Five,' in D.A. Carson, et al, (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, Vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul (Tübingen/ Grand Rapids, MI: Mohr Siebeck/ Baker Academic, 2001), 6.

<sup>143</sup> *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 10. See also William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York, NY: T&T Clark, Ltd., 2006), 15: 'Baur's fresh approach marked a radical change in Pauline scholarship in reaction to previous dogmatic and church dominated theological approaches... [His reading of Romans] was an attempt to reinterpret the letter without being completely dominated by the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith.'

between his view...and the Lutheran view'<sup>144</sup> and 'persistently opposed the Lutheran view of Paul's controversy with Judaism.'<sup>145</sup> Baur presented a 'challenge to interpreters to rid themselves of presuppositions derived from the Reformation.'<sup>146</sup> The precise conflict between the Lutheran interpretation and that of Baur is that whereas the Lutheran view classically sees Paul's conflict over justification as his fight with Jewish legalism in favor of a salvation that comes via unmerited grace, Baur sees in it Paul's fight against Jewish particularism and exclusivity—a salvation that is only attainable within the parameters of Judaism proper—in favor of a universally available salvation through Christ:

[Paul] was the first to lay down expressly and distinctly the principle of Christian universalism as a thing essentially opposed to Jewish particularism. From the first he set this Christian principle before him as the sole rule and standard of his apostolic activity. In his Christian consciousness his own call to the apostolic office and the destination of Christianity to be the general principle of salvation for all people were two facts which were bound up inseparably in each other...<sup>147</sup>

In the case of Galatians, the message of Paul's rivals is not a merit-based, Pelagian justification, but one that limits justification to Jews only, which makes conversion to Judaism through circumcision necessary for non-Jews:

The Galatian Christians were very near falling away from the Gospel as it had been preached to them by the Apostle... This was the result of the influence of strange teachers, who had entered into these churches after the Apostle... These teachers represented to them that before all things they must submit to circumcision... Their opposition to the apostolic work of the Apostle Paul did not indeed go so far as to deny to the Gentiles participation in the Messianic salvation; in this respect they allowed the limits of Judaism to be broken through, but they were on this account all the more zealously desirous to hold fast the principle that even in this wider sphere, salvation could only be obtained in the form of Judaism.... They were desirous...to make...the salvation of mankind...depend entirely on the positive foundation of Judaism.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 12. Watson cites Baur's 'Über Zweck und Gedankengang des Römerbriefs, nebst einer Erörterung einiger paulinischer Begriffe, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Kommentare von Tholuck und Philippi,' in *Theologisches Jahrbuch* 16 (1857), 87ff.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>147</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:47; AD: 1:44-45. This is cited also in Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 10. See also Hans Rollman, 'From Baur to Wrede: The Quest for a Historical Method,' in *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses* 17 no 4 (1988), 445.

Although Baur explicitly notes that Paul's rivals differ from Galatians to Romans,<sup>149</sup> he nonetheless identifies the very same issues at stake in the justification quarrel, actually increasing in scope and significance from the Galatian- through the Corinthian- to the Roman epistle:

Just as in the Epistle to the Galatians [Paul] had emancipated Christianity from Judaism, by freeing it from circumcision, the outward sign of subjection which Judaism wished to impose on it as the necessary condition of salvation, so in the two Epistles to the Corinthians, he had established the principle that the call to, and participation in the Messianic salvation ought by no means to depend exclusively on the authority of the Apostles directly appointed by Jesus, but that he, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was an Apostle possessing equal rights with them. Now in the Epistle to the Romans he proceeds to do away with the last remaining portion of the Jewish exclusiveness, by taking up and representing it as the mere introduction to the Christian Universalism which extended to all nations.<sup>150</sup>

Justification in this scheme is primarily about Jew-Gentile relations as opposed to the timeless, moral dilemma faced by every person. Moreover, this interpretation of Baur's was inspired by his emphasis on

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<sup>148</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, 2 vols., trans. Rev. Allan Menzies (London: Williams & Norgate, 1875; reprinted as 2 vols. in 1 binding by Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003), 1:261-262; AD (Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi. Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre. Ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristenthums*, 2 vols. [Stuttgart: Becher and Müller, 1845; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 Vols. in 1: Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (L.W. Reiland), 1866]: 1:281): 'Die galatischen Christen waren sehr nahe daran, von dem Evangelium, wie es der Apostel bei ihnen verkündigt hatte, wieder abzufallen... Es geschah diess durch die Einwirkung fremder Lehrer, welche erst nach dem Apostel in diese Gemeinden gekommen waren... Sie stellten ihnen vor, dass sie sich vor allem der Beschneidung unterwerfen müssen... Ihre Reaction gegen die apostolische Wirksamkeit des Apostels Paulus geht nicht dahin, zu verhindern, dass auch die Heiden zur Theilnahme am messianischen Heil berufen werden, in dieser Hinsicht ist die Schranke des Judenthums auch für sie schon durchbrochen, um so eifriger aber sind sie bemüht, den Grundsatz festzuhalten, dass auch in dieser weitem Sphäre alles Heil nur in der Form des Judenthums zu Theil werden kann... Es ist daher schlechthin unmöglich, ohne dass man sich zum Judenthum bekennt und sich allem demjenigen unterzieht, was das Judenthum als nothwendige Bedingung des Heils vorschreibt, durch das Christenthum selig zu werden.' Watson also cites Baur's *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:55: '[In Galatians 2] the alternatives were either to do away with the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians altogether, or to continue to be Jews, and deny to the Gentile Christians any privilege which would place them on the same level with the Jewish Christians.'

<sup>149</sup> Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 1:324: 'The Apostle [in Romans] does not, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, set up this doctrine of salvation by faith alone, in opposition to Jewish Christian errors, but merely in opposition to Judaism.'

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:322. AD (1:344): 'Hatte er im Galaterbriefe das Christenthum vom Judenthum dadurch emancipirt, dass er es von dem äussern Zeichen der Knechtschaft, welches das Judenthum in seiner Beschneidung, als der nothwendigen Heilsbedingung, ihm aufdrücken wollte, befreite, hatte er in den beiden Korinthierbriefen den Grundsatz festgestellt, dass die Berufung und Gelangung zum messianischen Heil keineswegs nur durch die Auctorität der von Jesus unmittelbar berufenen Apostel vermittelt werden müsse, dass er, der Heidenapostel, ein mit jenen vollkommen gleichberechtigter Apostel sei, so kam es nun im Römerbriefe darauf an, den letzten Rest des jüdischen Partikularismus dadurch vollends aufzuheben, dass er nur als ein verschwindendes Moment des christlichen, auf alle Völker sich erstreckenden Universalismus aufgefasst und dargestellt wurde.' This is cited also in Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 11. Watson also cites Baur's 'Über Zweck und Gedankengang' (*supra* note 144), 207: 'In the main part of [Romans], from beginning to end, the theme is that each and every privilege of Jewish particularism, internal and external, is of no avail' (Watson's translation).

the historical context of Paul's theological writings—historical theology for Baur is answering the questions of theology by means of critical history—and his aberration of readings that, in his view, fail to do justice to the historical circumstances in which the texts were written in favor of a theologically driven hermeneutic.<sup>151</sup> As did Baur, Watson uses the Epistle to the Romans as an example and insists that 'Baur protests against the interpretation of the Epistle as a dogmatic handbook.' Whereas 'it has *become* the basis of Protestant dogmatics,' nevertheless 'that does not mean that this was its original intention.'<sup>152</sup> Based on his non-'Lutheran' understanding of Paul's struggle with Judaism, Baur therefore repudiated the common view of Romans 1-8 as the heart and center of the Epistle, and argued instead that it finds its climax in chaps. 9-11 where Paul explicitly addresses the more important, broad implications of his doctrine of justification (explained in its details in chaps. 1-8) for Jew-Gentile relations,<sup>153</sup> specifically for

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<sup>151</sup> So Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (*supra* note 143), 15: 'Baur sought to correlate a philosophy of history and an objective study of the data... Baur's fresh approach marked a radical change in Pauline scholarship in reaction to previous dogmatic and church dominated theological approaches.' This does not mean Baur favored history vis-à-vis theology. The point is that Baur, as a theologian, sought to do theology by means of critical history. See Chapter 4 below.

<sup>152</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 11. Baur describes the common treatment of Romans in *Paul the Apostle*, 1:323: 'In general, the origin and aim of the Epistle is considered from a purely dogmatic point of view, without inquiring exactly into the historical cause of the Epistle and the relations it bore to the Roman Church, and therefore attention is especially directed to it, as though the Apostle only intended to give a comprehensive and connected representation of the whole of his doctrinal ideas, so to speak, a compendium of Pauline dogma in the form of an apostolic letter.' Baur goes on to note (1:325) that although some interpreters have sought to give more weight to the occasional context of the Epistle in order to appease critics such as Baur himself, they still often refuse to allow any significance to that for the interpretation of the text, and indeed Baur blames this on their dogmatic commitment to the traditional interpretation of Martin Luther: 'Even when persons are obliged to make certain concessions on my account, or at least to notice the anomalous views advanced by me, so little do they relinquish the purely dogmatic point of view, that they show a more decided antagonistic interest by leveling and straightening all the rough places and difficulties which they think must attend the concrete circumstances of the origin of an Epistle, thereby providing that the dogmatic aspect shall in no way be diminished by the historical, and that in an Epistle like that of the Romans, the attempt shall not be made to deviate from the strictest normal bounds of Luther's theory of justification by faith.'

<sup>153</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 11. Watson cites Baur's 'Über Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefs und die damit zusammenhängenden Verhältnisse der römischen Gemeinde,' in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* IX Heft 3 (1836), 154. This fact is also noticed by Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (*supra* note 143), 15, 121: '[Baur's] proposal to make Romans 9-11 the focus of Paul's thought in the letter rather than, as had previously been the consensus, chs 1-8, was an attempt to reinterpret the letter without being completely dominated by the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith... Rom. 9-11 was neglected, being viewed as concerning only theodicy or predestination...in the exegesis prior to F.C. Baur...' See also Harris, *Tübingen School*, 182-183. For more on the views of scholars concerning the relationship of Romans 9-11 to the Epistle as a whole, see the discussion and references of John Piper in his 'Excursus—The Place of Romans 9-11 in the Epistle,' in his *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 17-19. Especially illuminating for the present argument is his mention (18) of A.M. Hunter: 'In

the benefit of the Roman congregation(s) as indicated in chaps. 14-15.<sup>154</sup> In other words, the discussion of ‘works’ versus ‘faith’ serves the utilitarian purpose of supporting the more significant matter of Jew-Gentile relations, not vice versa.

However difficult it may be to put the New Perspective into a nutshell, this reading of Baur’s is as close to one as there can be. While commentators often associate the main voices of the New Perspective on Paul as those of Krister Stendahl, E.P. Sanders, James D.G. Dunn, and N.T. Wright, covering a span of 40+ years worth of publications (1963-present), its bare essentials can be found in two works by Stendahl: his address in 1961, ‘The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,’ and its sequel in 1963, ‘Paul among Jews and Gentiles,’ both of which were later published as articles.<sup>155</sup> The main emphases in these works is that the traditional Protestant reading of Paul mistakenly imposes upon the New Testament a non-historical scenario in which Paul’s unique doctrine of justification is the result of his wrestling with conscience, his failing quest to attain salvation by means of perfect, meritorious Law-keeping.<sup>156</sup> Alternatively, he suggested, Paul appears to have had a ‘robust conscience,’ so that when he

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explicit dependence on [the Romans commentary of C.H.] Dodd, [Hunter] writes, “Paul may have written this section earlier as a separate discussion of a vexed question. It forms a continuous whole and may be read without reference to the rest of the letter.” Piper cites Hunter’s *Introducing the New Testament* (Philadelphia: SCM Press, Ltd., 1975), 96.

<sup>154</sup> See Baur’s *Paul the Apostle*, 1:321-81. See also Francis Watson’s masterful treatment of Romans 14-15 with regard to the occasion of the text in his *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 88-105, reprinted as the article, ‘The Two Roman Congregations: Romans 14:1-15:13,’ in Karl P. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991): 203-215.

<sup>155</sup> ‘The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,’ in *The Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963): 199-215, reprinted in his *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979: 78-96; ‘Paul among Jews and Gentiles,’ in his *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979: 1-77.

<sup>156</sup> Stendahl, ‘The Apostle Paul,’ 78, 79, 80, 81, 86: ‘In the history of Western Christianity—and hence, to a large extent, in the history of Western culture—the Apostle Paul has been hailed as a hero of the introspective conscience... It is exactly at this point that Western interpreters have found the common denominator between Paul and the experience of man, since Paul’s statements about “justification by faith” have been hailed as the answer to the problem which faces the ruthlessly honest man in his practice of introspection... The impossibility of keeping the whole law is a decisive point in Paul’s argumentation... [but] it appears that Paul’s references to the impossibility of fulfilling the Law is part of a theological and theoretical scriptural argument about the relation between Jews and Gentiles. Judging from Paul’s own writings, there is no indication that he had “experienced it in his own conscience”... It is also striking to note that Paul never urges Jews to find in Christ the answer to the anguish of a plagued conscience... The problem we are trying to isolate could be expressed in hermeneutical terms somewhat like this: The Reformers’ interpretation of Paul rests on an analogism when Pauline statements about

looks back on his former life in Judaism, e.g. Philippians 3, he speaks not of his shortcomings with respect to the Law but of his flawlessness.<sup>157</sup> This mistake in Protestant tradition is attributed to Luther's anachronistic interpretation that was born via his own experience with the Catholic Church,<sup>158</sup> which has been perpetuated by subsequent Protestantism in its tendency to make Paul's personal struggle—thusly conceived—the timeless example of every human's spiritual struggle,<sup>159</sup> so that justification in the Pauline corpus is primarily concerned with the question: 'On what grounds, on what terms, are we to be saved?,' while the matter of Jew-Gentile relations is marginalized to the extent that it is merely an example of the practical significance of justification, which is really the main issue.<sup>160</sup> But Stendahl insists that the Lutheran interpretation is not grounded in the actual historical context of Paul's writing<sup>161</sup>

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Faith and Works, Law and Gospel, Jews and Gentiles are read in the framework of late medieval piety. The Law, the Torah, with its specific requirements of circumcision and food restrictions becomes a general principle of "legalism" in religious matters. Where Paul was concerned about the possibility for Gentiles to be included in the messianic community, his statements are now read as answers to the quest for assurance about man's salvation out of a common human predicament.'

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 82-4: '...the Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther's struggle with his conscience. But it is exactly at this point that we can discern the most drastic difference between Luther and Paul... In [Luther] we find the problem of late medieval piety and theology. Luther's inner struggles presuppose the developed system of Penance and Indulgence... Penetrating self-examination [by Christians during this time] reached a hitherto unknown intensity... It is in response to [the] question, "How can I find a gracious God?" that Paul's words about justification in Christ by faith, and without the works of the Law, appears as the liberating and saving answer... In these matters Luther was a truly Augustinian monk, since Augustine may well have been one of the first to express the dilemma of the introspective conscience... [But] Paul had not arrived at his view of the Law by testing and pondering its effect upon his conscience; it was his grappling with the question about the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God...which had driven him to that interpretation of the Law which was to become his in a unique way.'

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 79: 'Especially in Protestant Christianity...the Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther's struggle with his conscience. But it is exactly at that point that we can discern the most drastic difference between Luther and Paul, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> century...'

<sup>160</sup> Stendahl, 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles,' 3: 'While Paul addresses himself to the relation of Jews to Gentiles, we tend to read him as if his question was: On what grounds, on what terms, are we to be saved? We think that Paul spoke about justification by faith, using the Jewish-Gentile situation as an instance, as an example. But Paul was chiefly concerned about the relation between Jews and Gentiles—and in the development of *this* concern he used as one of his arguments the idea of justification by faith.'

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 5: 'Such a shift in focus and perception blocks our access both to the original thought and the original intention of Paul. It leads to distortions of our historical description of Paul's ministry and to misunderstandings of the problem Paul intended to solve by his observations on faith and law and salvation. The fact of the matter is that if we read Paul's answer to the question of how Gentiles become heirs to God's promises to Israel as if he were responding to Luther's pangs of conscience, it becomes obvious that we are taking the Pauline answer out of its

and that it hinders good interpretation at numerous points in the Pauline canon.<sup>162</sup> Instead, he claims that Paul's 'doctrine of justification by faith was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel,'<sup>163</sup> and that since 'Paul was chiefly concerned about the relation between Jews and Gentiles,' the 'idea of justification by faith' was in fact only 'one of his arguments' that was 'developed out of *this* [greater] concern.'<sup>164</sup> Hence, Romans 9-11 'is not an appendix to chs. 1-8, but the climax of the letter.'<sup>165</sup>

This new perspective on justification in Paul is shared by another prominent voice in New Perspective exegesis, with surprisingly similar terminology, James D.G. Dunn:

The doctrine of justification by faith was formulated within and as a result of the early mission to Gentiles. It was a polemical doctrine, hammered out in the face of Jewish Christian objections to

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original context... It goes without saying that Paul's primary focus on Jews and Gentiles was lost in the history of interpretation... Once this [focus] became inoperative in the central thinking of the church...the road was ever more open for beautiful spiritualizations of Pauline theology. Romans became a theological tractate on the nature of faith. Justification no longer "justified" the status of Gentile Christians as honorary Jews, but became the timeless answer to the plights and pains of the introspective conscience of the West. And Paul was no longer seen "among Jews and Gentiles" but rather as the guide for those perplexed and troubled by the human predicament. His teaching now detached from what he had seen as his task, his mission, and his aim—to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.'

<sup>162</sup> Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul,' 86, 87, 94: 'This shift in the frame of reference affects the interpretation at many points... The radical difference between a Paul and a Luther at this point has considerable ramification for the reading of the actual texts... What we have called the Western interpretation has left its mark even in the field of textual reconstruction...' Also, 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles,' 3, 5: 'The lost centrality of "Jews and Gentiles" is most clearly to be felt in a study of Romans... [When] Paul's primary focus on Jews and Gentiles was lost in the history of interpretation...the road was ever more open for beautiful spiritualizations of Pauline theology. Romans became a theological tractate on the nature of faith... Once the human predicament...became the setting of the church's interpretation of Paul's thought, it also became less obvious that there was in fact a great difference of setting, thought, and argument between the various epistles of Paul. As his teaching of justification was removed from its setting within the relationship between Jew and Gentile and became part of his teaching about salvation, the difference between Jews in Romans and Judaizers in Galatians also came to have little interest...'

<sup>163</sup> Stendahl, 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles,' 2. See also Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul,' 84, 86: 'Paul had not arrived at his view of the Law by testing and pondering its effect upon his conscience; it was his grappling with the question about the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God...which had driven him to that interpretation of the Law which was to become his in a unique way... The problem we are trying to isolate could be expressed in hermeneutical terms somewhat like this: The Reformers' interpretation of Paul rests on an analogism when Pauline statements about Faith and Works, Law and Gospel, Jews and Gentiles are read in the framework of late medieval piety. The Law, the Torah, with its specific requirements of circumcision and food restrictions becomes a general principle of "legalism" in religious matters. Where Paul was concerned about the possibility for Gentiles to be included in the messianic community, his statements are now read as answers to the quest for assurance about man's salvation out of a common human predicament.'

<sup>164</sup> Stendahl, 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles,' 3.

<sup>165</sup> Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul,' 85. See also his 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles,' 4.



that mission as law-free and not requiring circumcision. 'Justification by faith' was Paul's answer to the question: How is it that Gentiles can be equally acceptable to God as Jews?<sup>166</sup>

And more recently, with terminology surprisingly similar to that of Baur, Dunn has said:

The new perspective shed[s] light on Paul's theology by allowing us to see that its polemical thrust was directed not against the idea of achieving God's acceptance by the merit of personal achievement (good works), but against the Jewish intention to safeguard the privilege of covenant status from being dissipated or contaminated by non-Jews. Paul was reacting against the exclusivism which he himself had previously fought to maintain.<sup>167</sup>

So Baur is shown to have predated the works of Stendahl and Dunn at numerous points by more than a century.<sup>168</sup> (1) He rejected the traditional Lutheran conception of Paul's conflict with Judaism as non-historical. (2) He argued instead that the main thrust of the justification discussions lie in their relation to the greater matter of Jew-Gentile relations, not vice versa. (3) He saw Paul's objection to the Judaizing project as his repudiation of a position that would exclude Gentiles from the people of God. (4) He saw Paul's emphasis on justification by faith without works of Law as his means of defending a position that would put the Gentile on equal ground with the Jew with respect to the availability of salvation. (5) He blamed what he saw as an unhistorical misunderstanding on non-historical readings of Paul's Epistles, particularly Romans.

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<sup>166</sup> *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 340.

<sup>167</sup> Ed., *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10. Compare with Baur's *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 1:55: '[In the justification dispute of Galatians 2] the alternatives were either to do away with the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians altogether, or to continue to be Jews, and deny to the Gentile Christians any privilege which would place them on the same level with the Jewish Christians.'

<sup>168</sup> Campbell (*Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* [*supra* note 143], 15) specifically draws a connection between Baur and Stendahl: 'Baur's fresh approach marked a radical change in Pauline scholarship in reaction to previous dogmatic and church dominated theological approaches. His proposal to make Romans 9-11 the focus of Paul's thought in the letter rather than, as had previously been the consensus, chs 1-8, was an attempt to reinterpret the letter without being completely dominated by the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith. In the light of Stendahl's use of the same proposal and for a similar reason nearly one and a half centuries later, Baur's genius is obvious.' Likewise Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 13, 14: 'K. Stendahl has strongly emphasized the conflict between the traditional Lutheran approach to Paul and the historical approach pioneered by Baur... It should be apparent that Stendahl's position is very close indeed to that of Baur. The significance of his work is therefore that, over against the unhistorical existentialist approach of dialectical theology, he has revived Baur's insistence on the need to relate Paul's theological reflection to his historical context and his practical concerns.'

Watson exposes the fact that interpreters in the so-called Lutheran tradition, or the ‘Old Perspective,’ even those who have otherwise expressed great appreciation for Baur’s contributions to church history and New Testament studies, have failed to notice just how much Baur’s interpretations oppose the traditional Lutheran view of the justification and in fact stand in line with that of the New Perspective: ‘Modern interpreters in the Reformation tradition have made little use of Baur’s insights in this area, despite his influence in other respects, and in so far as they have, they have assumed that Baur and the Reformation are compatible.’<sup>169</sup> According to him, this failure is owing to the fact that the ‘representatives of the “dialectical theology” that has influenced Pauline studies so deeply for nearly seventy years mistakenly felt that they could combine some of Baur’s historical results with an emphatic restatement in contemporary terms of Luther’s view of Paul’s theology.’<sup>170</sup> Using Rudolf Bultmann as an example, Watson points out that although he consents to the Baurian idea that Paul’s chief objection to his Judaizing rivals is their view that ‘the condition for sharing in salvation is belonging to the Jewish people,’<sup>171</sup> in his own theology ‘this is allowed no real significance for Pauline theology for “the real problem of the Law” is “the problem of legalism, the problem of good works as the condition for participation in salvation.”’<sup>172</sup> Watson summarizes:

Here and elsewhere, Bultmann and other representatives of dialectical theology remain studiously silent about the fact that Baur persistently opposed the Lutheran view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism—the view which dialectical theology sought to revive. The idea that Paul’s ‘doctrine’ might be closely related to his historical activity was implicitly rejected.<sup>173</sup>

But however much Baur’s view of Paul’s justification battles can be described as proto-Stendahl, Baur himself ironically did not arrive at this view by means of a Sanders-like view of second temple Judaism as

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<sup>169</sup> *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 12.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>171</sup> Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951), 55.

<sup>172</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 13, citing Bultmann’s *Theology of the New Testament* (*supra* note 171), 111.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

‘covenantal nomism,’<sup>174</sup> and he certainly never went so far as a Dunn-like reinterpretation of ἔργων νόμου and ἐκ πίστεως in Paul,<sup>175</sup> or of δικαιοσύνη and δικαιώω in the way of Wright,<sup>176</sup> although he did in fact have something original to say about their use in Paul.<sup>177</sup> Instead, Baur carries out his work on justification fully assuming the classic, Lutheran view, wherein the Law

is given to man simply that he should observe it and work it out in practice; and thus, the law being given and known, the way in which man can set himself in that adequate relation to God which answers to the idea of religion consists in that practical disposition which issues in active obedience, in keeping the commandments of the law. The law, the works of which are the ἔργων νόμου, is the law of Moses, and thus it is only in the domain of the Jewish religion as the religion of the law that the δικαιοσύνη ἐξ ἔργων νόμου can be expected or attained. The moral law generally and the Mosaic law were not distinguished from each other in the apostle’s view...<sup>178</sup>

Even more, Baur’s view of Paul’s diagnosis of the problem created by the Law in Galatians is quite traditional:

It was not the defectiveness or imperfection of the law that produced the want, but on the contrary, the perfection of it, its spirituality, that it stands too far from him, and too high above him for man to be able to fulfill it.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>174</sup> See Sanders’s *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1977; reprint, 1983).

<sup>175</sup> See especially his ‘The New Perspective on Paul,’ in *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65 (1983): 95-122; ‘Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.10-14),’ in *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 523-42; *Romans*, 2 vols., Word Biblical Commentary 38 A, B (Dallas, TX: Word, Inc., 1988); *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990); ‘Yet Once More—“The Works of the Law”: A Response,’ in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46 (1992): 99-117; *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary IX (London: A&C Black; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002); *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (*supra* note 166), 354-79.

<sup>176</sup> See especially Wright’s ‘Justification: The Biblical Basis and its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism,’ in Gavin Reid (ed.), *The Great Acquittal: Justification by Faith and Current Christian Thought* (London: Collins, 1980): 13-39; ‘Justification’ in David F. Wright, *et al* (eds.), *New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988): 359-61; *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd., 1991; republished, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992); ‘Romans and the Theology of Paul,’ in David M. Hay, *et al* (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, Vol. III (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995): 30-67; *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Saul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997); *Romans*, New Interpreter’s Bible X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002); and most recently, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (London: SPCK/ Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005).

<sup>177</sup> See Baur’s *Paul the Apostle*, 1:134-68.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:137.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:138.

The deep inward foundation on which the apostle's doctrine of justification rests is the moral consciousness of man: it is in the moral consciousness of man, as he is while yet standing under the law, that the law works out the proof of its own inability to save him. In this sphere law and faith stand over against each other in the relation of division and atonement. Now this contrast, which is found deepest and most intense in the individual human consciousness, presents itself also as a great historical contrast in the relation of Judaism and Christianity.<sup>180</sup>

Perhaps this is why so few have made any explicit connections between Baur and the New Perspective. Probably, whether or not Baur was a 'New Perspective theologian' would depend on how far down the evolutionary chain of Stendahl, Sanders, Dunn, and Wright one must go to be such. If by 'New Perspective' one means only that view of justification that sets Paul's ambition to place Gentiles on equal ground with Jews with respect to the availability of salvation, primarily concerned with its 'universality' as opposed to its nationalistic 'particularity,' then Baur is certainly at home in the New Perspective, and in fact, it is not nearly as 'new' as we once thought. But if it must include a view of early Judaism akin to Sanders's 'covenantal nomism' and a view of *ἔργων νόμου* and *ἐκ πίστεως* similar to that of Dunn, then he is certainly not. He is all the more distanced from it if by 'New Perspective' one means the full-on Wrightian view of *δικαιασύνη* as covenant membership and *δικαίωσις* as merely the declaring of an individual to be 'in the covenant,' which only secondarily implies any Protestant conception of imputed righteousness.

In retrospect, it is perplexing how Baur arrived at such a view of Paul's polemic over justification without arriving there via the path taken by Dunn and Wright. It may be more perplexing how this same feat was accomplished again in the twentieth century by Stendahl. On the other hand, it is quite ironic that despite his obvious New Perspective-like claims about church history, Baur's ideas led him in the opposite direction than that taken by recent New Perspective scholars in general in terms of his attitude toward Judaism. Whereas one of the most important as well as popular achievements of the New Perspective has been its opening of a path to peaceful, mutually courteous dialogue between Jewish and Christian scholars, Baur himself evidences an antipathy to Judaism as the obviously wrong sort of

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:182.

religion *vis-à-vis* Paulinism, the former based supposedly on external, insincere formalities and the latter on internal, spiritual, sincere, pure religion.

The relation of Christianity to heathenism and Judaism is, as we have seen, defined as that between the absolute religion and the preparatory and subordinate forms of religion. We have here the progress from servitude to freedom, from nonage to majority, from the age of childhood to the age of maturity, from the flesh to the spirit.<sup>181</sup>

In fact, the apparent negative implications for Judaism in late antiquity is a point of criticism leveled recently by Mark D. Nanos against the New Perspective conventionally conceived.<sup>182</sup> Worse still, Baur made this antithesis between Judaism and early Christianity analogous to the relationship of Catholicism to Protestantism and was happy to discuss that at length too.<sup>183</sup>

It is important to mention, additionally, that the New Perspective has not only revived Baur's unique conception of Paul's polemic with Judaism over justification, but by extension, it has also resurrected the matter of intra-apostolic conflict and the centrality of Pauline opposition in New Testament studies, both of which are uniquely owing to the innovative and hotly disputed work of Baur over a century ago. When Sanders taught us that second temple Judaism was not the legalistic, works-based, self-help religion of popular Protestant imagination, it was Dunn who came along and attempted to make sense of Paul's polemic against justification by *ἐργων νόμου*. And not only Dunn, but the rest of New Testament scholars involved in the 'perspective' debate saw the Antioch incident of Galatians 2 as the *locus classicus*. Even today, Markus Bockmuehl calls the incident 'the classic test case' for evaluating Baur's 'bipolar construct.'<sup>184</sup> Since the advent of the New Perspective on Paul in the mid to late nineteen-

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:212.

<sup>182</sup> See his 'What Was at Stake in Peter's "Eating with the Gentiles,"' in his *Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 295-300.

<sup>183</sup> See his *Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus nach den Principien und Hauptdogmen der beiden Lehrbegriffe. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Herrn Dr. Möhler's Symbolik* (Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1834), his *Der christlichen Gnosis, oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: C.F. Oslander, 1835), and his *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus aufs neue kritisch untersucht* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta'schen Verlagshandlung, 1835). Also, see my pp. 34-37 above.

<sup>184</sup> *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 126, 127.

seventies, the Epistle to the Galatians has become a virtual beehive of activity, with scholars of all persuasions and emphases viewing it as a potential Battle of Midway, hoping to turn the tide of scholarly opinion decisively in favor of one or another viewpoint or ‘perspective.’ Paul’s autobiographical material in chaps. 1-2 seem nine months pregnant with clues to the nature and facts about Christian origins and Jew-Gentile relations, particularly Paul’s love-hate relationship with Judaism and the Torah, as well as the early church’s love-hate relationship with Paul, and historical critics and theologians alike have all but strangled the two chapters in search of the Epistle’s occasional context. Dunn’s reading of Paul’s fight with Peter commended itself in the minds of many and revolutionized scholarly interest in the historical developments that led up to the incident and the subsequent Epistle to the Galatians. Suddenly it became important again whether Paul was writing to the Galatians early on or midway through his apostolic career, and therefore whether the Galatian churches were established on the first or the second missionary journey.<sup>185</sup> The trustworthiness of the Acts chronology compared to that of Paul—important to Acts commentators, but largely seen as the uninteresting curiosity of F.C. Baur over a hundred years prior by the rest of the field—became absolutely crucial, especially as it implicated Paul’s relationship to the Jerusalem apostles leading up to and following the Jerusalem meeting and the subsequent incident at Antioch.

While it is true that Baur is probably guilty of letting the intra-apostolic conflict dominate his interpretations to a fault, certainly with regard to the dating of the New Testament texts and some of his claims about the church in the second century and the Ignatian Epistles,<sup>186</sup> his genius lay in his exceptional ability to grasp the ‘big picture’ in ways that illumine otherwise perplexing tendencies within the New Testament as a whole. And the broad strokes that make up his overall picture have stood the test of time. The gains of the New Perspective on Paul, as well as the numerous recent publications (relatively unrelated to the ‘perspective’ discussion) that have taken some such path as his in their total view of the

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<sup>185</sup> Although many of the main ‘perspective’ discussions (and for that matter some of the commentaries) have not actually found much of any new interest in this. See Nanos’s ‘Introduction,’ in his *Galatians Debate*, xiv-xv.

<sup>186</sup> See Harris, *Tübingen School*, 213-216, 237.

earliest church as having been wrought with intra-apostolic conflict over the matter of Gentile circumcision (and therefore whether the Jesus movement is at home within Judaism or something new) are a testament to this.<sup>187</sup> In all these ways and more, the scholar of Tübingen has been proven without doubt not only to have been a visionary well ahead of his time despite the ridicule he has suffered since then, but also essential groundwork for all up and coming New Testament scholars.

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<sup>187</sup> E.g. see Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles* (1986); Michael Goulder, *St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1994; republished, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 66 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE QUESTION OF HEGEL AND THE MEANING OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

I opened my thesis with a reference to the drama that unfolded in Christian Europe as a result of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century: the clash of faith and reason and the quest for valid knowledge, not least valid knowledge of God. This is the context of Ferdinand Christian Baur's story. I have identified Baur as an important figure in the drama, whose importance has largely been misunderstood and misrepresented in much subsequent biblical and theological studies, and whose uniquely Christian agenda has been wrongly maligned in some of it. Baur is often identified as 'the founder of historical-critical theology,'<sup>1</sup> but this needs elucidation. In this Chapter, I want to look directly at Baur's positive contribution to theology within the greater context of Enlightenment rationalism and Hegelianism in particular, in order to establish what exactly can and should be said about Baur's relationship to Hegel as well as what should be said of Baur's unique historical theology. It will be my contention that the common criticism of Baur's historiography, that he represents the pitiful end that awaits all would-be presupposition-less history, is based on a misunderstanding of Baur's conceived historical method as well as a misunderstanding of Hegel's own philosophy of history, and that claims to the effect that Baur was an atheist with a pagan agenda are radical theories that will only satisfy the most ardent Evangelicals

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<sup>1</sup> Klaus Scholder, *The Birth of Modern Critical Theology: Origins and Problems of Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century*, trans., John Bowden (London: SCM Press/ Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press, 1990), 144. This is the most widely held view among scholars: e.g. see Heinz Liebing, 'Historisch-kritische Theologie': Zum 100. Todestag Ferdinand Christian Baur's am 2. Dezember 1960,' in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* LVII (1960): 302-317; Klaus Scholder, 'Vorword,' in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Ausgewählte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed., Klaus Scholder (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1963): 1:vi; Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966); Ulrich Köpf, 'Ferdinand Christian Baur als Begründer einer konsequent historischen Theologie,' in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 89 (1992): 440-461. Robert Morgan ('Biblical Classics: II. F.C. Baur: Paul,' in *The Expository Times* 90 [1978], 4) is a little more cautious: 'Baur must probably be judged the greatest single pioneer and practitioner in the field of historical theology,' but Emanuel Hirsch is willing to call Baur 'the true author of historical-critical theology' (quoted in Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 1; Hodgson cites Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie im Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des europäischen Denkens* [Gutersloh: C. Bertelmanns Verlag, 1954], 5:518). Scholder (*Birth of Modern Critical Theology*, 1) does however mention other scholars who have at some point been identified with this distinction, including Johann Salomo Semler and Richard Simon.



whose *a priori* convictions prohibit appreciation for Baur to the extent that his theological aims and assumptions paid respect to the challenges of modernity, and that this represents either a grave misunderstanding of Baur's entire project of historical theology or an outright disagreement with him on a fundamental level regarding the possibility of supplementing faith with reason, making his mission and message all the more relevant to us today.

### The Appearance of History and the Disappearance of God

I said in Chapter 1 that Baur was not the first to conduct a critical-historical study of Christianity or the Bible. The truth is the Enlightenment itself deserves credit for giving birth to a thoroughgoing historical focus in all academia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That history and historical knowledge shared center stage with greater epistemological concerns during the period, enlisting the sustained attention of philosophers like Pierre Bayle (d. 1706), David Hume (d. 1776), Voltaire (d. 1778), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (d. 1781), Johann Gottfried Herder (d. 1803), Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), and later Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (d. 1831) and Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855) is a well-documented fact,<sup>2</sup> even if the prevalence of historical pyrrhonism, or skepticism about historical knowledge, has been unduly neglected.<sup>3</sup> Again, while we commonly identify the Age of Enlightenment as the victory of the natural sciences over the imperial rule of the Church, the distinction between the sciences and the humanities was much less clear at the time. At stake in the entire conflict was epistemology: To whom or what do we turn for valid knowledge? Divine revelation had enjoyed that role up till then. That God was knowable to mankind through the Church had been the cherished faith of Catholics for a millennia, and where Rome no longer held sway the Protestants had merely transferred that privilege to the Bible itself.

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<sup>2</sup> I highly recommend the detailed sketch of critical history during and immediately following the Enlightenment in Robin G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1946; rev. ed., 1996), 86-204. A briefer, more general sketch can be found in Mark T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2000), 28-49.

<sup>3</sup> See Dario Perinetti, 'Philosophical Reflection on History,' in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1108-1117. Perinetti, however, identifies Pierre Bayle and David Hume as good examples of historical pyrrhonists. I do not mean by this that traditional Christianity's reaction to the Enlightenment and modernity has not been studied; it has.

But when the gains of Tübingen alumnus Johannes Kepler's telescope simultaneously contradicted the Bible's assumption that the sun revolves around the earth (Joshua 10:12-14) and the Church's tradition that mankind dwells in the center of God's affections (and thus his world), then it became evident to many that a person's own reason was a far more trustworthy source of valid knowledge.<sup>4</sup> And to the degree the Enlightenment may be reduced to reason's replacement of divine revelation as the supreme epistemological guide, historical thinking (in the form of historical re-thinking) must be said to have led the charge side-by-side in the conflict with the natural sciences. Once the Christian claims of the earth's past were invalidated, so also were its claims of the human past. Whereas pre-modern Europeans viewed history theologically, as the story of God's revelatory acts and mankind's reactions, knowable through the Bible and Church tradition, the powerful implications of scientific discovery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries forced a reevaluation of the Bible's supernatural account. A natural—i.e. non-theological—description of not only the earth's but also the human past was the order of the day, and large number of philosophers willing to answer that call made sure the effects of the Enlightenment would become permanent in (what we call) the humanities as well as the sciences.<sup>5</sup>

This represents the birth of 'critical' history. There was now a distinction to be made between history as 'the past' and history as 'the study of the past.'<sup>6</sup> It needed to be studied because the Christian claims could no longer be taken for granted. Thus 'critical history' aims to be objective and unbiased. So also there came to be a distinction between revealed religion (e.g. Judaism, Christianity) and natural religion (e.g. Deism). The Deist philosopher Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) took it upon himself to do what traditionally was the job of the theologian: to read the biblical Gospels, seeking

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<sup>4</sup> Kepler lived 1571-1630. His work in fact was concerned with planetary motion and supported the earlier work of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), whose work in fact supported Copernicanism. (Nicolaus Copernicus lived 1473-1543.)

<sup>5</sup> All graduate students learning German for reading knowledge are taught early-on that German culture since the Enlightenment has nevertheless used the adjective *wissenschaftlich* ('scientific') for all scholarly endeavors, even those whose home is not the natural sciences (*die Naturwissenschaften*).

<sup>6</sup> Peter C. Hodgson (*The Formation of Historical Theology* [*supra* note 1], 145, 280) notes that the distinction between the German *die Geschichte* and *die Historie* was not current at the time of Hegel and Baur.

enlightenment.<sup>7</sup> But Reimarus was not in search of Jesus Christ the second person of the Trinity. He was aiming to conduct a historical study of Jesus of Nazareth, the flesh and blood man whose followers later wrote the Gospels, the content of which would need to be filtered by critical methodology.<sup>8</sup> For the American patriot and Deist Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) this filtering famously took the form of literally cutting out portions of the Gospels (with scissors), such as the virgin birth, miracles, and the resurrection.<sup>9</sup>

One consequence of this victory of modernity was that theology as an academic discipline came to be suspect in many people's opinions (particularly inasmuch as it has tried to play along with the historians in their game). I have already quoted the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who said: 'Among Germans, I am immediately understood when I say that philosophy has been corrupted by theologians' blood.'<sup>10</sup> This attitude prevails in much contemporary academia as well. Richard Dawkins, who is neither a historian, philosopher, or theologian, but a biologist, very boldly asked in 2006: 'What makes anyone think that "theology" is a subject at all?'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Reimarus's essay was published posthumously in 1778 by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing himself. Its full original title was: *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger*, Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbütterschen Ungenannten (Braunschweig: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1778; ET: *Fragments*, ed. Charles H. Talbert [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970]).

<sup>8</sup> Hence Albert Schweitzer's classic documentation of historical-Jesus study up to William Wrede (1859-1906) begins with Reimarus: *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1906); ET: *The Question of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans., W. Montgomery (New York: Adam & Charles Black, 1910; reprint, 1948).

<sup>9</sup> A fantastic volume that has been compiled is by Dickinson W. Adams (ed.), *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels: "The Philosophy of Jesus" and "The Life and Morals of Jesus,"* The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Second Series (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1983), wherein Eugene R. Sheridan explains (3) that 'Jefferson's rational religion was perhaps nowhere better expressed than in his two compilations of extracts from the New Testament—"The Philosophy of Jesus" (1804) and "The Life and Morals of Jesus" (1819-1820?).' These compilations of the biblical texts were extracted from multiple New Testaments (King James Version) since the cutting-out of one passage would prohibit the use of anything on that page's reverse. The so-called 'Jefferson Bible' is available for viewing in the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. Dickinson's volume provides high-quality facsimiles of portions of Jefferson's 'Philosophy of Jesus' and the entirety of his 'Life and Morals of Jesus.'

<sup>10</sup> From his *Der Antichrist* of 1895, section 10. This ET comes from Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, The Viking Portable Library, ed. and trans., Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976), 576. This statement is ironic because if it were not for theology there would have been no such field as philosophy.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Emptiness of Theology,' in *Free Inquiry* 18 no 2 (2006), 6.

To a large extent, the reaction of theologians and thoughtful Christians was (and has been) to cower to the self-proclaimed rule of Enlightenment rationalism over history.

The overriding tendency in Protestant theology since Kierkegaard [1813-1855] has been to *separate* God and history, faith and historical knowledge, dogmatic theology and historical critical theology, and to relate them only externally or paradoxically if at all.<sup>12</sup>

This reaction has played an important role in the reshaping of what formerly was known simply as ‘theology.’ What were theology faculties are now departments of religious studies, and there are important distinctions made among personnel, not only between theologians and historians, but between both of those and literary critics as well. And neither is it any longer assumed that a theologian is necessarily interested in biblical theology. ‘New Testament studies’ became a field in counter-distinction to theology, but even this is only an umbrella term. Generally speaking, a New Testament scholar entering the field must choose whether to conduct specialized studies in historical, literary, or theological New Testament criticism, with but a few aiming to incorporate all three over a life’s work. One such example is N.T. Wright’s *Christian Origins and the Question of God* series, which speaks to the prevailing categorizations and sees their manifestation in two manufactured genres used by New Testament scholars:

Some people (self-styled historians, mostly) will protest that one should never muddle up [the theological] set of questions with the historical set. Some theologians have taken this warning seriously and have written about Christian theology with little attention to the historical question of Christian beginnings... This potential mutual hostility between ‘history’ and ‘theology’ has resulted in the well-known split in New Testament studies, whereby the subject is divided into ‘Introduction,’ conceived as a ‘purely historical’ task, and ‘Theology,’ conceived less historically and more synthetically.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology* (*supra* note 1), 270.

<sup>13</sup> N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, Vol. 1 (London: SPCK, 1992), 13. See his pp. 1-144 for this entire discussion. It is Wright’s explicit aim in this series (yet to be completed) to combine the strengths of historical, theological, and literary approaches to New Testament study.

Peter C. Hodgson traces this pattern response as far back as the Enlightenment philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781).<sup>14</sup> Even though he was not a theologian by vocation, he found the whole matter vitally important. In a short essay on historical proof and Christian proclamation, Lessing bemoans the predicament of the enlightened mind that would be Christian:

If I had lived at the time of Christ, then of course the prophecies fulfilled in his person would have made me pay great attention to him. If I had actually seen him do miracles...I would have gained so much confidence that I would willingly have surrendered my intellect to his... But I live in the eighteenth century, in which miracles no longer happen... What is asserted is only that the reports which we have of these prophecies and miracles are as reliable as historical truths ever can be. And then it is added that historical truths cannot be demonstrated: nevertheless we must believe them as firmly as truths that have been demonstrated... If no historical truth can be demonstrated, then nothing can be demonstrated by means of historical truths. That is: accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.<sup>15</sup>

This alleged unbridgeable gap between actual occurrences in the past and valid, meaningful knowledge in the present of that past is what Lessing referred to when he said next: 'That, then, is the ugly, broad ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap.'<sup>16</sup> Robert Morgan and John Barton describe the impact of Lessing's claims upon a young David Friedrich Strauss like this:

[Strauss's] critical aim of demolishing the historicity of the Gospel records [in his *Das Leben Jesu* of 1835] was a first step in the program of a theologian who had learned...from Lessing that there was a 'big, ugly ditch' between truths of history and truths of reason.<sup>17</sup>

G.E. Michalson, Jr. speaks to the power influence of Lessing's dilemma in subsequent thought, even if only thanks to the greater influence of Lessing's biggest challenger, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855):

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<sup>14</sup> *Formation of Historical Theology* (*supra* note 1), 271.

<sup>15</sup> 'On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power,' in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Lessing's Theological Writings*, ed. and trans., Henry Chadwick (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 51-53; AD: 'Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft,' in his *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: G.I. Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung, 1855), see pp. 266-268. The essay in German can more easily be found in Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 8, ed., Paul Rilla (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1956): 9-16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Morgan and John Barton, *Biblical Interpretation*, The Oxford Bible Series (Oxford/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 47.

Thanks largely to Kierkegaard, references to Lessing's 'ugly ditch' between the contingent truths of history and the necessary truths of reason have become a permanent part of our theological landscape... It is well known that Lessing and Kierkegaard respond very differently to the ditch—whereas Lessing, due to his 'old legs' and 'heavy head' (not to mention theological scruples) cannot make it across, Kierkegaard goes ahead and leaps.<sup>18</sup>

Kierkegaard famously asked, 'Is it possible to base an eternal happiness upon historical knowledge?'<sup>19</sup> and then answered, according to Hodgson, 'that it is possible only if the "historical point of departure" for an eternal happiness...is distinguished from every other mode of historical occurrence and if knowledge of it is distinguished from every other form of historical knowledge.'<sup>20</sup> In other words, 'That depends.' I.e. Kierkegaard only made it across Lessing's ditch because he did not accept the terms set by Lessing before.

Typically, it is simply assumed that Kierkegaard borrowed Lessing's ditch intact and that he made it across while Lessing did not. However, a careful examination of the issue suggests that we are in fact dealing with two quite different ditches... When Kierkegaard agrees with Lessing about the inadequacy of historical knowledge as a basis for religious convictions, it is for reasons different from those important to Lessing. Kierkegaard and Lessing agree that, even if we have a complete and reliable picture of religiously momentous historical events, we cannot move from historical knowledge to religious faith. But whereas Lessing raises the logical objection that such a move would force us 'to jump with that historical truth to a quite different class of truths,' Kierkegaard argues that historical knowledge—indeed, *any* sort of knowledge—is inadequate to the religious object... To see God in Jesus requires the eyes of Kierkegaardian faith, not knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

Kierkegaard's unique Christian theology—'Kierkegaardian faith'—built upon a foundation essentially different than the traditional, historical proposition that is the gospel, is what has led to his common identification as the father of existentialism. But not every nineteenth century intellectual who leaped over Lessing's 'ugly, broad ditch' did so by means of existentialism. Morgan identifies the Tübingen alumnus

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<sup>18</sup> 'Lessing, Kierkegaard, and the "Ugly Ditch": A Reexamination,' in *The Journal of Religion* 59 no 3 July (1979), 324.

<sup>19</sup> See the title page to Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans., David W. Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).

<sup>20</sup> Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 271.

<sup>21</sup> Michalson, 'Lessing, Kierkegaard, and the "Ugly Ditch,"' 325, 333-334. Michalson cites Lessing, 'On the Proof of the Spirit,' 54; AD, 14.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) as ‘the philosopher who aimed to overcome the ‘big ugly ditch...which Lessing and the Enlightenment had posited between the “accidental truths of history” and the “necessary truths of reason.”’<sup>22</sup>

### Hegel and Historiography

That F.C. Baur’s critics associate him with the philosopher Georg Wilehlm Friedrich Hegel is indicative of the disdain that the latter’s philosophy has won for him since his death in 1831. But the truth is Hegel was a mental giant in the early nineteenth century, second only to Immanuel Kant in his contribution to modern thought. It is not uncommon to hear that while all philosophy is a footnote to Plato, all modern and postmodern philosophy is a reaction to Hegel. Peter Singer claims that ‘no philosopher of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries has had as great an impact on the world as Hegel,’ adding that ‘the only possible exception to this sweeping statement would be Karl Marx—and Marx himself was heavily influenced by Hegel.’<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, part of Hegel’s contribution to philosophy has been the confusion born of his torturous diction. Singer refers to the way ‘commentaries are studded with references to the “Himalayan severity” of his prose, to his “repulsive terminology” and to the “extreme obscurity” of his thought.’<sup>24</sup> Peter Hicks observes that ‘Hegel’s philosophical writings are so obscurely written that some philosophers have decided he is not actually saying anything at all.’<sup>25</sup> It is almost certain that the extreme density of his writing hindered the impact that he did make, and it may well be one reason why New Testament scholars—especially English speaking—have been so reticent to grant Baur a fair hearing, taking into full account the context and content of the Stuttgart-born philosopher’s work in historiography, which, as we

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<sup>22</sup> *Biblical Interpretation*, 62.

<sup>23</sup> In Roger Scruton, *et al*, *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche* (Oxford/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 109.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> *The Journey So Far: Philosophy through the Ages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 324.

will see below, Baur obviously relied upon to a great extent, though in different ways than customarily assumed.

To begin with, while Hegel's name is well-known even outside of philosophy, his great interest in historiography and the centrality of his philosophy of history to his overall philosophical system is not common knowledge. Some might be surprised to hear Mark T. Gilderhus say Hegel's work 'may have amounted to the most ambitious philosophical treatment of history ever attempted.'<sup>26</sup> What is known of Hegel is that he was a German idealist, in every way a child of the Enlightenment. But the heart and center of his philosophical system was his philosophy of world history, which assumes a developing process of improvement and positive change guiding the course of time, the pinnacle of which can be found in the dawn of the Enlightened Age, and especially in the mind of Hegel himself. Indeed for Hegel it is not simply that human reason has superseded divine revelation as the highest source of valid knowledge; reason itself has assumed the role traditionally occupied by Christianity's 'God.' In his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (published posthumously in 1837) he boldly claims, 'Reason is the Sovereign of the World.'<sup>27</sup> This supremacy of reason means for Hegel that all things—everything in the world, the dominion of Reason—must be explained *rationally*, by which he means naturally and not supernaturally: 'Reason is the Sovereign of the World... The history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process.'<sup>28</sup> Very important is the way Hegel here brings world history into the discussion. The 'world' over which Reason reigns supreme is a world of space and time, and whereas the rational explanation of space relies has nature as its subject, the explanation of time must look to history. Hence, he devoted himself to these 'lectures on the philosophy of history.' J. Sibree, the English translator of the *Vorlesungen*, explains that the published lectures 'are recognized in Germany as

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<sup>26</sup> *History and Historians* (*supra* note 1), 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (London/ New York, NY: George Bell & Sons, 1894), 9 (ET of the 3<sup>rd</sup> German ed.); AD, see Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, ed. Eduard Gans (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1837; reprinted in Hegel, *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, Vol. 12 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 9.



a popular introduction to his system; their form is less rigid than the generality of metaphysical treatises.’<sup>29</sup> And it is in the introductory section of the work—which is lengthy for an introduction, but manageable even to the general reader<sup>30</sup>—that Hegel summarizes and draws upon his earlier ideas of Absolute Spirit, freedom, Idea, and development, found in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) and the *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817, 1827, 1830). (The rest of the work is just his own description of the development of world history.)

Unfortunately, in Hegel’s estimation, despite the recent strides taken by enlightened thinkers, historical studies were as yet suffering from a lack of proper methodology. He generalizes two basic approaches to prior history-writing and outlines them. First is what he calls ‘original history’ (*die ursprüngliche Geschichte*). To this method belong such historians as Herodotus and Thucydides, ‘whose descriptions are for the most part limited to deeds, events, and states of society, which they had before their eyes, and whose spirit they shared.’<sup>31</sup> The original historian

describes scenes in which he himself has been an actor, or at any rate an interested spectator. It is short periods of time, individual shapes of persons and occurrences, single, unreflected traits, of which he makes his picture. And his aim is nothing more than the presentation to posterity of an image of events as clear as that which he himself possessed in virtue of personal observation, or life-like descriptions. *Reflections are none of his business*, for he lives in the spirit of his subject; *he has not attained an elevation above it.*<sup>32</sup>

The second type of history is what Hegel refers to as ‘reflective.’<sup>33</sup> It is variegated, but includes Enlightenment historiography. Some strata include ‘universal’ histories, by which the historian aims to describe a lengthy period of a nation or people’s past, ultimately bringing that narrative up to the present.

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<sup>29</sup> In the ‘Translator’s Preface’ to Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, iii.

<sup>30</sup> The ‘Introduction’ to the *Lectures* has been republished in Sibree’s ET in Monroe C. Beardsley (ed.), *The European Philosophers from Descartes to Nietzsche*, The Modern Library Classics (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1988: 537-608. The German publication (*Vorlesungen*) does not actually designate this section as an *Einführung* though.

<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 (italics mine).

<sup>33</sup> On which, see *ibid.*, 4-8.

By extension there is also the ‘pragmatic,’ which aims to do history for the utilitarian purpose of addressing the concerns of the present. The third style within the ‘reflective’ approach, which Hegel calls the greatest representative of German Enlightenment history, is the ‘critical.’ This approach as he sees it is more concerned with historical methodology than it is the actual past: ‘It is not history itself that is here presented. We might more properly designate it as a History of History; a criticism of historical narratives and an investigation of their truth and credibility.’<sup>34</sup> Enlightenment historiography is above all characterized by its rationalism. Its aim ultimately is to disallow subjective value judgments and especially dogmatic, religious presuppositions: to describe the past, in the now-famous words of Leopold van Ranke (1795-1886), ‘how it really happened’ (‘wie es eigentlich gewesen [ist]’).<sup>35</sup>

Although it is the most evolved approach to history, the rationalist historical method of the Enlightenment, with its ‘raw empiricism,’<sup>36</sup> in Hegel’s judgment fails to satisfy because it offers piecemeal abstractions of the past. The critical aversion to interpretive judgment results in desultory, disconnected bits of the human past that offer no meaningful substance, which Hegel cannot view as a rational whole. Thus he proposes a new methodology: a ‘philosophical’ one. ‘The most general definition that can be given is that the Philosophy of History means nothing but the thoughtful consideration of it. Thought is, indeed, essential to humanity.’<sup>37</sup> He is aware that philosophy by definition would appear to contradict the pure objectivity so vital to modern historiography, but is confident he can justify himself:

To insist upon Thought in this connection with history, may, however, appear unsatisfactory. In this science it would seem as if Thought must be subordinate to what is given, to the realities of fact; that this is its basis and guide: while Philosophy dwells in the region of self-produced ideas, without reference to actuality. Approaching history with such a presupposition, Speculation might be expected to treat it as a mere passive material; and, so far from leaving it in its native truth, to

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> I first found this line in Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 233. Breisach cites Leopold van Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker*, ed., W. Andreas (Wiesbaden, 1957), 4.

<sup>36</sup> This is Hans Rollman’s term: ‘From Baur to Wrede: The Quest for a Historical Method,’ in *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 17 no 4 (1988), 445. Heinz Liebing (‘Historisch-kritische Theologie’ [*supra* note 1], 307) also speaks of its ‘rohen Empirismus.’

<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 8-9.

force it into conformity with a tyrannous idea, and to construe it, as the phrase is, *a priori*. But as it is the business of history simply to adopt into its records what is and has been, actual occurrences and transactions, and since it remains true to its character in proportion as it strictly adheres to its data, we seem to have in Philosophy a process diametrically opposed to that of the historiographer. This contradiction, and the charge consequently brought against Speculation, shall be explained and confuted.<sup>38</sup>

He next argues that no person can do history with complete objectivity anyway, and that those who presume to are the guiltiest of what they condemn, i.e. bringing unacknowledged presuppositions into their work:

We must proceed historically—empirically. Among other precautions we must take care not to be misled by professed historians who (especially among the Germans, and enjoying a considerable authority) are chargeable with the very procedure of which they accuse the Philosopher—introducing *a priori* inventions of their own into the records of the Past... Even the ordinary, the ‘impartial’ historian, who believes and professes that he maintains a simply receptive attitude, surrendering himself only to the data supplied him, is by no means passive as regards the exercise of his thinking powers. He brings his categories with him, and sees the phenomena presented to his mental vision exclusively through these media.<sup>39</sup>

So perspective is not necessarily a bad thing, not even for the historian. Indeed it should play a vital role in history: ‘The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of *Reason*... Reason is the Sovereign of the World... The history of the world therefore presents us with a rational process.’<sup>40</sup> ‘Thought is, indeed, essential to humanity.’<sup>41</sup> ‘In all that pretends to the name of science, it is indispensable that Reason should *not* sleep, *that reflection should be in full play*.’<sup>42</sup> In this way, the use of good reason itself is what a ‘rationalist history’ needs. It is the remedy for the otherwise illegible mix of disconnected data. The philosophical historical method is nothing but the ‘thoughtful consideration’ of historical data.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 (italics mine).

This philosophical approach to history is classically known as the ‘speculative’ method. Patrick Gardiner summarizes the conviction that drives the speculative approach thusly:

Something more is required than the bare narration and analysis of particular historical situations and processes if what men have thought and done in the past is to appear as other than a mere sequence of occurrences, lacking in rational system or coherent design. Such a mere sequence would constitute an affront not only to our intellects but to our moral sensibilities as well... The bits and pieces, if they are to be truly comprehended and understood, must be seen in relation to a wider context, and this requires a synoptic vision of history as a whole—a vision, moreover, that presents the historical process as manifesting some kind of discernible ‘meaning’ or ‘significance’ or ‘order.’ For in this way alone can it appear acceptable to us as self-respecting rational beings.<sup>43</sup>

Robin G. Collingwood says that Hegel’s

philosophy of history is for him not a philosophical reflection on history but history itself raised to a higher power and become philosophical as distinct from merely empirical, that is, history not merely *ascertained* as so much fact but *understood* by apprehending the reasons why the facts happened as they did.<sup>44</sup>

In the way the speculative method of history aims to discern some overall ‘meaning’ and ‘significance’ to the past, it has also described as ‘teleological.’ There is an overall meaning to be gleaned from the past precisely because the course of human history has been guided by one all-encompassing end.

However, to make sense of Hegel’s conceived ‘end,’ we must return to his deification of reason: ‘Reason is the Sovereign of the World.’ But he does not suppose that reason has always existed as ultimate reality, certainly not to the degree it might have. Instead it has been undergoing a process of development, progressively becoming more and more *conscious* of itself. (Thus it is not exactly an *impersonal* ultimate reality.) Before the formation of the world of space and time, it existed only as a potential reality: pure thought without physical form. Hegel assigns to it the name Idea (*die Idee*). Through the formation of the universe, Idea began to undergo a process of actualization via self-awareness, given birth to by human thought, hence the new name he gives to it: Spirit (*der Geist*).

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<sup>43</sup> ‘Speculative Systems of History,’ in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed., Paul Edwards (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company & the Free Press, 1967), 7:518.

<sup>44</sup> *Idea of History* (*supra* note 1), 113-114. See also Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 50-70.

The Idea is in truth the leader of peoples and of the World; and Spirit, the rational and necessitated will of that conductor, is and has been the director of the events of the World's History. To become acquainted with Spirit in this its office of guidance, is the object of our present undertaking.<sup>45</sup>

The transition from 'Idea' to 'Spirit' however is misleading, largely due to the inadequacy of English to translate the German *der Geist*. The word *Geist* in German contains within it numerous shades of meaning, which have resulted in its being translated in English not only as 'ghost' and 'spirit,' but also 'mind' and 'intellect.' Only together do these word sets (ghost, spirit + mind, intellect) bring out Hegel's own meaning. What formerly was pure thought without physical form (*die Idee*) began through human thought to take on self-consciousness, transforming from mere impersonal 'thought' to a personal, self-conscious 'intellect' or 'mind.' But this process of actualization has not given birth to a personal reality that is human. It is divine, ultimate reality. What was 'reason' has become 'Reason,' the sovereign of the world.

This developing process of Idea/Spirit began with the earliest human thought, and has reached its pinnacle in the enlightened thought of the modern, rational mind, most of all in the momentous achievement of Hegel's own philosophy. This increasing actualization of Idea unto preeminence as Reason at the dawn of the Enlightenment provides the aforementioned teleological goal of all human history.

It may be said of Universal History, that it is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially. As the germ bears in itself the whole nature of the tree, and the taste and form of its fruits, so do the first traces of Spirit virtually contain the whole of that History.<sup>46</sup>

So history for Hegel, as Hicks summarizes, 'is the dynamic process of the gradual development and self-actualization of Absolute Mind through human minds'; as human knowledge progresses it 'gives rise to

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<sup>45</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 8. AD (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* [supra note 27], 14): 'Die Idee ist der Führer der Völker und der Welt. Der Geist führt die Welt, und seine Führung wollen wir kennenlernen.'

<sup>46</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, 18.

new truths and situations that are one step nearer to being in tune with the Absolute Mind.’<sup>47</sup> In short, truth is God, and the closer we come to truth the closer we come to God. As he says clearly in his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (also published posthumously, in 1832), ‘The object of religion, like that of philosophy, is the eternal truth, God and nothing but God and the explication of God.’ ‘In philosophy of religion we have as our object God himself, *absolute reason*.’ ‘God is the absolute truth, the truth of all things.’<sup>48</sup>

Before I move on, I should note that one very important aspect of Hegel’s theory of historical development is the *absence* of the traditional formula ‘thesis, antithesis, synthesis.’ Hegel, and subsequently his alleged disciple Baur, has been the victim of a great deal of criticism for supposedly simplifying all history into neat triadic patterns of dialectical idealism, but Walter Kaufmann, arguably one of the most respected experts on German philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, furiously exposes this as fantasy, which is at best an oversimplification and at worst a horrible misrepresentation of Hegel:

Fichte introduced into German philosophy the three-step of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, using these three terms. Schelling took up this terminology; Hegel did not. He never once used these three terms together to designate three stages in an argument or account in any of his books. And they do not help us understand his *Phenomenology*, his *Logic*, or his philosophy of history; they impede any open-minded comprehension of what he does by forcing it into a schema which was available to him and which he deliberately spurned. The mechanical formalism, in particular, with which critics since Kierkegaard have charged him, he derides expressly and at some length in the preface to the *Phenomenology*.

Whoever looks for the stereotype of the allegedly Hegelian dialectic in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* will not find it. What one does find on looking at the table of contents is a very decided preference for triadic arrangements. ...Parts V, VI, and VII are all divided into A, B, C, and all but one of these nine sections are further subdivided into three parts. But these many triads are not presented or deduced by Hegel as so many theses, antitheses, and syntheses. It is not by means of any dialectic of that sort that his thought moves up the ladder to the absolute knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *The Journey So Far*, 325.

<sup>48</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, One-Volume Edition: The Lectures of 1827, ed., Peter C. Hodgson, trans., R.F. Brown, et al (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 78, 96, 114.

<sup>49</sup> *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Co., Inc., 1965), 168.

### Historical Theology as the Crossroads of Faith and Reason

So goes Hegel's philosophy of history. While it is very concerned with the question of God, it is not historical theology, and it is not distinctly Christian. Now what is the relationship of Baur to Hegel? Is Baur's historical theology essentially pagan or is it Christian? I have so far enumerated several common claims made about their relationship, and explained how many of them represent misunderstandings. There are more false trails to be identified. But now I must explain what exactly Baur and Hegel share in common, and how it was that Baur, despite his respect for the Hegelian system and his loyalty to modernist rationality, considered himself to have stopped short of David Friedrich Strauss's apostasy.

First of all, the two men share an understanding of the relationship of philosophy to history. What is essential in Hegel's philosophy of history is that he makes philosophy an indispensable element of historical study. Baur clearly shares this conviction with Hegel. He rejects the supernaturalist-rationalist dichotomy<sup>50</sup> and his own history is every bit as 'speculative' as the latter's. This in fact is what sets Baur apart from Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, who combines theology with philosophy, but not history.<sup>51</sup> (In fact, he is not directly interested in history at all.)

But for as much as Baur shares this 'speculative' approach to history with Hegel, his own understanding of it is uniquely his and this can be shown in several ways. To begin with, he stated his belief in the necessity of philosophy in history early and plainly. 'Without philosophy, history always remains to me dead and mute.'<sup>52</sup> This is found in the preface to the first volume of his *Symbolik und Mythologie* of 1824, long before any of Hegel's lectures were published and according to Robert Morgan,

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<sup>50</sup> See Liebing, 'Historisch-kritische Theologie' [*supra* note 1], 306, and Hodgson, 'General Introduction,' in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Ferdinand Christian Baur: On the Writing of Church History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1968), 12-36.

<sup>51</sup> See Hodgson, *Formation of Historical Theology*, 3, and Morgan and Barton, *Biblical Interpretation*, 63. This is true even though Robert Morgan ('Ferdinand Christian Baur,' in Ninian Smart, *et al* [eds.], *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 1:261) rightly identifies Schleiermacher as the first to use the term. See his *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums zum Behuf einleitender Vorlesungen* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1811; ET: *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, trans., T.N. Rice [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1966]), which is divided into three sections, the second being titled: 'Von den historischen Theologie.'

<sup>52</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Symbolik und Mythologie, oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1824-1825), 1:xi-xii.

‘a decade before [Baur] found in Hegel’ what was for him ‘the most helpful metaphysical handmaid for contemporary theology.’<sup>53</sup> Baur would have been occupied with the *Symbolik und Mythologie* at the very same time that Hegel was 335 miles away in Berlin delivering his very *first* lectures on the philosophy of history in the 1822-1823 school-year. Clearly it can no longer be said that Baur was a slavish disciple of Hegel, nor that he naively set out to conduct a purely historical investigation of the New Testament and the early church, free of presuppositions, only to then impose his preconceived Hegelian philosophy upon the evidence, a disaster of would-be objective history. (In fact this is all the more true inasmuch as Baur is indebted to Hegel, given the original terms of the latter’s project of speculative history.)<sup>54</sup> Just like Hegel before, in his own *Die Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtschreibung* of 1852, Baur is keenly aware of the nuanced relationship of historical occurrences to the historian’s knowledge of them, and he is skeptical of the modern historian’s ambition to present the facts simply the way they happened without bias:

Once interest in...a presentation of what has happened has been awakened, the question arises as to how knowledge concerning events is related to the events themselves. The more precisely this relation is considered, the less can it simply be assumed that historical presentation is nothing but the true, adequate reflection of what objectively has happened...<sup>55</sup>

There can be no comprehensive work in church history whose view of history does not wholly manifest the theological vantage point of its author. Thus there are as many different views of history as there are different theological vantage points.<sup>56</sup>

Moreover he decries all attempts on the part of historians to completely separate historical data and one’s own subjective viewpoint:

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Ferdinand Christian Baur’ (*supra* note 51), 1:262.

<sup>54</sup> See my pp. 108-109 above.

<sup>55</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Epochs of Church Historiography*, in his *On the Writing of Church History* (*supra* note 51), 46. AD (*Die Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtschreibung* [Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1852; reprinted in Reinheim: Druckerei E. Lokay, 1963, 1]: ‘Ist aber einmal das Interesse für eine solche Darstellung des Geschehenen erwacht, so entsteht auch die Frage, wie sich das Wissen um das Geschehene zu dem Geschehenen selbst verhält, und je genauer dieses Verhältniss erwogen wird, um so weniger läßt sich schlechthin voraussetzen, daß die geschichtliche Darstellung nichts Anderes sein werde, als der treue, adäquate Reflex des objektiv Geschehenen.’

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 49. AD (5): ‘...so kann es doch kein umfassenderes kirchenhistorisches Werk geben, dessen Geschichtsanschauung nicht ganz den Charakter des theologischen Standpunkts an sich trüge, auf welchem sein Verfasser steht. Gibt es daher ebenso viele verschiedene Geschichtsanschauungen, als es verschiedene theologische Standpunkte gibt...’



The word *history* has both an objective and a subjective meaning. This double meaning sets up as an immediate unity that which critical analysis causes to split widely and indeterminably apart. History is both what has happened objectively and the subjective knowledge of what has happened.<sup>57</sup>

But this does not mean for Baur that the truth of the past cannot be known to us, or that historical truth is relative to the historian or subject to the historian's superior consideration of it. Here we find a key distinctive that makes Baur's otherwise Hegelian, speculative historical method uniquely his own. As far as he is concerned, it is not just that history needs 'thoughtful consideration' as Hegel put it. Rather, historical data without personal reflection is lifeless and cannot speak to us in the present: 'Without philosophy, history always remains to me dead and mute.' But *with* the proper philosophical reflection history may come to life and speak for itself with its own voice. This could theoretically solve the dilemma of the historian's voice distorting the historical data's, if the historian could but get out of its way.

The historian can be equal to his task only in so far as he transposes himself into the objective reality of the subject matter itself, free from the bias of subjective views and interests, whatever they may be, so that instead of making history a reflection of his own subjectivity, he may be simply a mirror for the perception of historical phenomena in their true form.<sup>58</sup>

Thus Baur's methodology works like a 'mirror' (*der Spiegel*) and presumes to reverse the dynamic relationship of the historian to the history. Rather than the historical data being made to reflect the historian's own personal ideas, the historian becomes the living reflection of the history's own meaning. Hodgson describes it this way:

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. AD (1): 'Das Wort Geschichte hat sowohl eine objektive als eine subjektive Bedeutung. In dieser doppelten Bedeutung setzt es als unmittelbare Einheit, was für die Analyse der kritischen Betrachtung unbestimmbar weit auseinander fällt. Geschichte ist sowohl das objektiv Geschehene, als das subjektive Wissen des Geschehenen.'

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 241. AD (247): '...sondern es ist auch längst anerkannt, daß der Geschichtschreiber seiner Aufgabe nur in dem Grade entsprechen kann, in welchem er frei von aller Einseitigkeit subjektiver Ansichten und Interessen, welcher Art sie auch sein mögen, sich in die Objektivität der Sache selbst versetzt, um statt die Geschichte zum Reflex seiner eigenen Subjektivität zu machen, vielmehr selbst nur der Spiegel zu sein, in welchem die geschichtlichen Erscheinungen in ihrer wahren und wirklichen Gestalt angeschaut werden.'

‘Speculation’ is a way of thinking critically about the given of history, a thinking in which the historian transcends his subjective vantage point and the given presents *itself* in its own objectivity. Speculative thinking is two-directional or reflexive in character: it is a movement from the historian through the text to the subject matter, but at its climax it occasions a reversal in the flow of meaning such that the subject matter now unveils itself to the interpreter in its objective truth and meaning, and becomes the subject rather than the object in the act of knowing.<sup>59</sup>

What may be a more adequate criticism of Baur here, rather than the cliché ones that I have already addressed, is that he does not explain this methodology in enough detail. There are basically two texts wherein Baur discusses the nuts and bolts of historical methodology—*Die Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtschreibung* (1852) and the ‘Introduction’ to the *Vorlesungen über christliche Dogmengeschichte* (published posthumously in 3 volumes in 1865-1867), both of which have been translated into English by Hodgson.<sup>60</sup> But Baur simply does not give to us the kind of depth we would like in order to grasp how he intends to achieve this reversal. He simply jumps from the conviction that ‘there can be no comprehensive work in church history whose view of history does not wholly manifest the theological vantage point of its author’<sup>61</sup> to the claim that the historian’s task is to ‘transpose himself into the objective reality of the subject matter itself, free from the bias of subjective views and interests.’<sup>62</sup>

Another valid criticism might be to say that Baur *failed* in his attempted resolution to the dilemma. I.e. now that we know it can no longer be said that he naively went about history unaware of the problem of subjectivity, it still remains open to debate whether or not his efforts to deal with the problem succeed on a methodological level. E.g. I do not see how his method essentially arrives at anything better than to say: ‘We all have our biases and we should do the best we can to overcome them.’

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<sup>59</sup> ‘General Introduction’ (*supra* note 51), 17-18. For more on this from Baur, see his *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Christian Dogma*, trans., Peter C. Hodgson, in Baur’s *On the Writing of Church History* (*supra* note 51), 283, 335-336.

<sup>60</sup> See my Bibliography.

<sup>61</sup> *Epochs of Church Historiography*, 49.

<sup>62</sup> *Epochs of Church Historiography*, 241. Obviously, these two quotes are separated by some 200 pages, but those 200 pages are mostly his descriptions of church historians and their work, from Eusebius to his own day.

Secondly, both Hegel and Baur share a conception of time as a developing process of the manifestation of Absolute *Geist*—God. Hegel had claimed history ‘is the dynamic process of the gradual development and self-actualization of Absolute Mind through human minds.’<sup>63</sup> He ‘calculated the whole of his philosophical system to demonstrate the creative immanence of divine power in space and time,’ and ‘nature and history for him served up the testimony.’<sup>64</sup>

But Hegel’s philosophy of history is not overtly theological and certainly not Christian. There is even some legitimacy to the question as to whether his worldview is panentheistic, since all of space and time is the actualizing (not exactly the incarnating, but not far from it either) of God. Thus Hegel is called pagan. But in Baur’s hands the speculative historical method is intentionally and explicitly theological and exclusively Christian. Whereas Hegel primarily sees the developmental manifestation of God in the increasing progress of mankind’s thought processes, peaking in German idealism and Hegel’s own philosophical system, Baur sees God’s developing self-disclosure in the whole story of Christian dogma:

If...the whole history of dogma is an organic process of development, determined by its inner moments, in which everything that goes before is the necessary presupposition of what follows, and everything that follows is only the result of what has gone before, so that all the particular forms of dogma may be conceived simply as the elements of a unity that pervades the whole, then the true historical presentation can only be one that allows this process of development to appear entirely as it is in itself. Thus, the method of the history of dogma is in error to the extent that it perceives in the entire course of dogma only the individual, the contingent, the arbitrary, the disconnected, and is unable to penetrate the external phenomena so as to reach the inner concept of the subject matter itself, the inner moving principle which can only be thinking Spirit as it struggles, in its relation to dogma, toward a consciousness of dogma, as well as toward self-consciousness.<sup>65</sup>

Hodgson says of Baur’s history of dogma:

It is the hermeneutical key to the study of church history, for it uncovers the internal ‘spiritual movement’ to which the ‘external phenomena’ of church history ‘are attributable as their ultimate basis.’ Dogma, as a conceptual phenomenon, is peculiarly appropriate as a historical ‘form’ or

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<sup>63</sup> Hicks, *The Journey So Far*, 325.

<sup>64</sup> Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 52-53.

<sup>65</sup> Baur, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Christian Dogma* (*supra* note 59), 305.

‘manifestation’ of the Idea constituting the essence of Christianity, for this Idea in turn is a conceptual reality, the self-actualization of thinking Spirit.<sup>66</sup>

And in contrast to the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, which also was primarily interested in Christianity, Baur’s historical study was less about Christianity’s place in the narrative of world religions and religious movements within human cultures, and more interested in the unique revelation of God in the Advent of Christ in the context of Judaism and the Roman Empire,<sup>67</sup> which he believed was to be studied only through the witness of the New Testament texts:

It is the great task of our time to critically investigate the early history of Christianity—its formation and first development—as it lies before us in the alignment of the scriptures that make up the contents of our New Testament canon, a task that can only arise from the innermost focus of the universal interests and movements of our time.<sup>68</sup>

The criticism of the Gospel history, so far as it immediately concerns the life of the Founder of Christianity, with which so many weighty questions are allied, will long remain the most important object of the critical labors of our time.<sup>69</sup>

I believe this is one reason why Baur admired the Apostle Paul so much. Paul seems to let the historical significance of the Advent of Christ dominate his overall theology like no other New Testament author, and Baur makes much of this in his treatment of the Apostle. I think he found in Paul a kindred spirit. ‘I worked much more than all of them.’<sup>70</sup> There are some places in Baur’s treatment of Paul where it actually becomes unclear whether he is still speaking for the Apostle’s theology or for his own, especially

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<sup>66</sup> Hodgson, ‘General Introduction’ (*supra* note 51), 11.

<sup>67</sup> This is not contradicted by the opening chapters of the first volume to his *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* of 1853, which opens with Christianity’s entrance into the world and the world’s religions. In fact, even there his focus is limited mostly to Judaism and Greek religion.

<sup>68</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi: Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre: Ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristenthums*, 2 Vols. (Stuttgart: Becher und Müller, 1845; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 Vols. in 1, ed. Eduard Zeller [Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag, 1866-1867], 1:1 (trans., mine).

<sup>69</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, 2 Vols., trans., Rev. Allan Menzies, [London: Williams & Norgate, 1875; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. in 1 vol. 1878-1879]; reprinted in 1 Vol. by Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003), 1:3.

<sup>70</sup> See my p. 50 above.

when he treats Paul's view of Christianity 'as a new principle in the world's historical development,' based on 1 Corinthians 15.<sup>71</sup>

This is precisely why I also defend Baur's Christian intentions. It is not the case that Baur was swept away by rationalism and modernity and only remained in the church for professional reasons. The opposite is the case. His view of God's progressive revelation of himself in time attributed to Christianity's entrance into the world the honor of being the *pinnacle* of that divine revelation. Baur elevates Christianity above everything else in the world, sometimes to a fault perhaps. This is why he makes such grandiose statements about the dire importance of his own research. It is not simply an ego trip. He literally believed God's disclosure of himself in the Christian religion made Christianity the most important thing in the world, and so he devoted himself to understanding as best he could exactly what had happened in that first century. This is also how I think it can be said Baur did attribute to Jesus Christ the status of God incarnate, not because Baur wrote treatises to this effect, because he did not. But his choice not to do that does not mean automatically that he reviled Christ. On the other hand, if you first of all understand what Baur *was* concerned with, i.e. the manifestation of God in time through the occurrence of Christianity, given birth to by Jesus of Nazareth and the resurrection-faith of Jesus' followers, then you get incarnation thrown in as well. If God was at work in the birth of this Christian religion it is because he was at work in Christ first of all.

The fact is simply that it is very difficult to pin Baur down on any one item of doctrine, whether the resurrection or the Trinity, and ask, 'Did he believe in this or not?'<sup>72</sup> It is difficult because Baur was not a dogmatic theologian. He chose to be a *historical* theologian. His task, as he saw it, was not to argue for the truth or error (in the abstract) of this or that theological proposition. His aim was to describe the story of Christianity's entrance into the world and the history of its doctrines. On a technical level he believed that proving supernatural occurrences in the ancient past lay outside the scope of the historian's

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<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*, 2:212-227.

<sup>72</sup> I once heard N.T. Wright say the problem with being a theologian or a biblical scholar is that one always feels pressure in public lectures and publications to clearly state every single thing he or she believes because otherwise someone somewhere will accuse you of not believing in something...

ability. That is why he does not argue for the resurrection; it is also why he does not argue *against* the resurrection. Whether or not he ‘believed’ in it is impossible to say. And there simply is not enough material to justify the leap taken by Horton Harris, that Baur was personally an atheistic pagan because his published historical works never affirm that he did believe in it, even if his works would lead us to believe he did not.<sup>73</sup> *This is all the more true when Harris rejects outright that any of Baur’s sermon material can be in play.* Harris must assume first of all that it is *impossible* that Baur could have made any use whatsoever of his academic studies in his personal beliefs or that his works could have anything positive to contribute to Christianity. Thus he holds apart what Baur’s entire life sought to bring together—history and theology—making it impossible that he could fairly judge Baur. It is not ultimately with Baur that Harris has problems; it is with critical history itself. He believes it is fundamentally at odds with ‘faith,’ unless it ‘proves’ the resurrection.<sup>74</sup> But that would not be ‘critical’ history since the outcome has been decided before the investigation. That is precisely what Baur was up against when he turned his back on his Pietistic background.

So when I say above that Baur was not a dogmatic theologian, but a historical theologian, and that he therefore set out to describe the history of Christianity and the development of Christian dogma without arguing ‘for’ or ‘against’ any particular doctrines, so that it becomes very difficult to pin him down as to whether or not he personally believed in some doctrine, I do not mean that Baur neatly separated his own faith from the history he studied so thoroughly. My entire case is that Baur’s life’s work was inspired by his own faith and that his unique historical theology was for him a *crossroads* of faith and reason. This is the essence of his historical theology. It is his response to the challenges of the Enlightenment upon revealed religion. There were numerous options available to him, such as to resist the

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<sup>73</sup> See my discussion of Harris’s *The Tübingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation of the School of F.C. Baur* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975; republished, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990) on pp. 73-83 above.

<sup>74</sup> Hence in the place where he tries to argue with Baur on a methodological level, over whether or not the historian can legitimately speculate on the occurrence of historical miracles without violating the principles of critical history, his argument turns quickly into an argument for the truth of Jesus’ physical resurrection, which is an altogether different debate—one that Baur explicitly avoided based on his fundamental conception of the historian’s task. See Harris, *Tübingen School*, 179-180.

challenge and condemn modernity's elevation of human reason. There was the option of ignoring the challenge and quietly going about the business of biblical or dogmatic theology as usual. And there was the option of joining in on the intellectual assault upon Christianity and adapting instead a comfortable, natural religion. There was even the option of emptying Christianity of all its vulnerabilities, such as its Scripture and its doctrine, to the point that it might as well be natural religion. Baur chose none of these. Instead he listens to the challenge. He accepts the terms. Christianity must be rational, not arbitrary. Christianity cannot exempt itself from the same criteria to which it would subject other religions. Christianity must be based on actual history, not merely experience. Christianity cannot exist apart from Christ and the New Testament. How can this be accomplished? Baur turns to history. This is where the real battle is to be fought. Historical theology for him is looking to history to answer the questions of theology. So much of modernity had simply given up on the biblical narrative and run to general revelation, which in turn led them to natural religion and a robust incredulity that calls all church history a power-play (*a la* Nietzsche). But even a naturalistic religion could not deny that the universe is both space and *time*. 'General revelation' must include history or it has again become 'particular,' just as biblical revelation. Baur set out to conduct critical-historical research of Christian origins, tracing in time what he interprets as the process of God's self-revelation. And while Hegel's Absolute *Geist* has finally, fully actualized in time through the evolution of philosophy, Baur's God has become known through Christ and Christianity.<sup>75</sup> This is very different even than 'historical theology' in the hands of Christian scholars today. Current use of the term simply means the history *of* theology or the history of religious thought.<sup>76</sup> It is now primarily a matter of doing history with theology as the object and increased historical knowledge of theology as its end. For Baur historical theology was primarily a matter of doing theology with history as its object and increased knowledge of God as its end.

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<sup>75</sup> And this is why Baur's historical theology is not panentheistic: because it does not imply that God has *invested* himself in the processes of time (Hegel's terminology is 'actualized'), only that he has *manifested* himself.

<sup>76</sup> As in Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Oxford/Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 1998), *et al.*

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